Recollections of Westminster & India

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J. M. MACLEAN

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RECOLLECTIONS OF WESTMINSTER AND INDIA.

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BY

J. M. MACLEAN

M.P. for Oldham, 1885-92; M.P. for Cardiff, 1895-1900

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PREFACE.

A large portion of this book has already been published in the "Manchester Guardian," and I am indebted to the courtesy of the Editor of that paper for permission to republish it. The book has been thoroughly revised, and considerable additions have been made to it, the chapter relating to my Indian career, in particular, having been greatly extended. I have also included in the work a number of letters from public men, several of which, and notably those of Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Bartle Frere, are of real historical importance.

"For, always roaming with a hungry heart,
Much have I seen and known."

— *Tennyson's Ulysses.*

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CHAPTER I.

Early Years—School Days—First Efforts in Journalism—"The Newcastle Chronicle"—"The Manchester Guardian"—"The Bombay Gazette"—Life in India.

RECOLLECTIONS OF INDIA AND WESTMINSTER.

I.

I wish to give in this book a faithful record of my career as a public man in India and in the House of Commons. It would seem to require a bold spirit to attempt an account of life in the House of Commons, which so many facile and accomplished pens are occupied every day in describing. But sketches in Parliament are nearly always the work of outsiders, and, if sometimes they are contributed by members, the chief object of their authors appears to be to conceal their identity. I propose, on the other hand, to relate freely and frankly my own personal experiences in the mightiest and most fascinating of all public assemblies, believing, as I do, that

I have some things to tell which may be of general interest, and not feeling daunted by the consideration that a man who sits down to write his reminiscences might as well write his own epitaph.

Probably I ought to begin by stating what are my qualifications for the task, and giving a short history of the preparation I went through to fit me for the work of becoming an active member and an observant critic of the Imperial Parliament. I frequently see myself spoken of as a retired Anglo-Indian who, having made a little money after a long period of service in the East, suddenly took a plunge into English public life. But as a matter of fact I have only spent twelve out of sixty-five years in India, though I have given close and constant study for very many years to Indian affairs. I had a very good training in England before I went to India.

My father was a Highland gentleman from the Island of Uist, in the furthest Hebrides. He came of a good stock, one of his cousins being Chief Justice in Canada, where his name is still remembered with honour. The Macleans

and Macdonalds were the two chief clans of the Western Highlands. In the eighteenth century, before the era of clearances and emigration began, the Hebrides were much more thickly populated than they are now. They supplied the bulk of the followers of Prince Charlie, and, after the '45, the Highland lairds sent many hundreds of them to enlist in the Royal Army of King George which fought at Minden and Fontenoy, and afterwards, under Wolfe, at Quebec. When the French had been expelled from North America, many of the Macleans who had served in the army obtained grants of land in Canada. They brought their friends, and the clan flourished so vigorously in their new Canadian home that the present chief of the clan Maclean, Colonel Sir Fitzroy Maclean, Bart., C.B., tells me he might, when he commanded a regiment at Montreal, have been guarded by a battalion of Canadian volunteers entirely composed of Macleans. These men worshipped in a parish church where the minister, the father of Major J. Bayne Maclean, of Montreal, preached a sermon in Gaelic every Sunday. So tenaciously

do Scotsmen, all over the world, cling to sentiment and old custom—

"From the low shieling on the misty island
Mountains divide us, and a waste of seas;
But still our blood is strong, our hearts are highland,
And in our dreams we see the Hebrides."

My father and two of his brothers went out while quite young men to Jamaica, and acquired considerable landed estates there. Returning rather late in life, when the coming emancipation of the slaves had already greatly reduced the value of all West Indian property, my father married a lowland lady, and settled down in the parish of Liberton, on the Braid Hills, near Edinburgh, from which Marmion caught his his first view of the Scottish capital. Liberton is also known in literature as the parish of Jeanie Deans. My mother's family name was Baigrie, which, according to an old book on Scottish genealogies, was a corruption of the nickname Beau-gré, given to a young Frenchman who came to Scotland in the train of the Earl of Errol, when that nobleman returned from exile after the '45. My young brother

and myself were brought up with good expectations, which, however, became much less bright before my father's death in 1839, when I was only four years old. My mother, alarmed at the gradual diminution of her income, moved to Newcastle-on-Tyne to be near friends there, and to take a smaller establishment, and, as the railway had not then reached Edinburgh, I remember travelling across the Cheviot Hills in the coach from Dalkeith in the depth of winter. The head of a great banking and mercantile firm, in London, with whom the remnant of our property was deposited, wrote to my mother soon afterwards offering her a presentation to Christ's Hospital for one of her boys, and, as I was the only one young enough to accept it, the presentation was made out in my name. So, one dark, grey morning my mother consigned me to the care of the guard belonging to the coach that ran to Darlington, then the terminus of the railway, and in 1844 I arrived from the north at Euston Station.

There was nobody there to meet me, and I sat down disconsolately on my little box, like David Copperfield when he was left alone in life, as I

often afterwards thought, till a man in livery came up and asked me if I was going to Wimpole Street. I was received there very coldly by the master of the house, a saturnine, miserable looking man, who hardly seemed to look at me, but his widowed daughter in the drawing-room made much of me, and for many years afterwards received me as a welcome guest on all my holidays in London. Being under nine years of age, I was sent first to the preparatory school at Hertford, but only remained there a few months. I had been very well trained in the North, having begun Latin when quite a child at the Circus Place School in Edinburgh, and having afterwards attended for two years the famous grammar school in Newcastle, kept by the well-known antiquary, Dr. Bruce; and my education was much further advanced than that of most of the Blue-coat boys, who indeed, in many cases, had had hardly any education at all. My first success at the school was when I was chosen to read prayers to the assembled boys in the dining hall. Then I was pushed forward to London before I was ten years old, and, when I was once there, I ran rapidly

through the classes, and attained the coveted distinction of becoming a Grecian, and being kept on for three years, after I was sixteen, to be prepared for the university.

Christ's Hospital in those days was very different from the school it has since become. The food, though good of its kind, was of Spartan simplicity and very meagre in quantity. Half a small loaf of bread in the morning, with a bowl of milk and water, a slice of meat at one o'clock, and dry bread with poor cheese and quite unpalatable beer for supper in the evening, was all we had to eat. Prisoners were much better fed, and it is pleasant to learn that the boys have now plenty to eat, and a great deal of variety at all their meals. We were often hungry enough, but it is a consolation to reflect that, although two-thirds of the boys were sons of poor clergymen, they always seemed to be provided with plenty of pocket-money. Holidays were short, and prizes almost unknown, and the school hours were very long. What seemed a superfluous piece of cruelty was that the boys all through the summer time rose early and went to school at seven

o'clock for an hour before breakfast. It is needless to say that the masters were then cross and usually late for duty, and that very little real work was done.

There were practically no playing grounds except the gravel yard facing Newgate Street; and, while we enjoyed a vigorous game at football, which the present generation would have sneered at as unscientific, we were obliged to go to the Oval on holidays for cricket, or to the Thames at Richmond or Lea Bridge for boating. But we had an excellent plunge bath, and were mostly good swimmers. The great merits of the school were the perfect equality of the boys, and the free and manly spirit which prevailed amongst them. The latter was, in great measure, due to the perfect independence allowed them to roam about London, and to see everything worth seeing in the great capital. We had long holidays twice a week, and knew the parks, the picture galleries, and all the sights of London more thoroughly than most people do. Many was the holiday I spent at the Great Exhibition of 1851, which had an air of poetry

about it not matched since the creation of Aladdin's palace. Another sight, which has always lingered in my memory, was the funeral of the great Duke of Wellington. The wail of the regimental bands playing the funeral march as they turned the corner of St. James's Street, and the long lines of streets crowded from the roadway to the attics, powerfully impressed the youthful imagination.

On another occasion I had the honour, at a very early age, of going to Court. This is a privilege, dating from Charles the Second's time, of the King's boys at Christ's Hospital who are trained to go to sea. One of these boys was ill, and the Head Mathematical Master, with whom I was a favourite, sent me to hold his drawing in his place. We all had new coats and white kid gloves, drove to St. James's in broughams, and passed through great rooms filled with the fashionable company who had come to Court for the first drawing room of the season. We were introduced to the Throne Room first of all—this was the old custom, but it was found inconvenient, and the Queen latterly received

the boys at Windsor Castle—and we were ranged in a semicircle in front of the great ladies of the Court who stood round the throne. Ministers and other great officers of state stood on either side. Presently the Queen was announced, and she entered with the Prince Consort and children. We fell on one knee, holding out our drawings, and the Queen, then a comely and happy-looking young matron, walked through the room, saying a kindly word or two, as she passed us, to the Prince. I noticed particularly that she shook hands with no one except the Duke of Wellington, then a very old man, whom it had been my great ambition to see.

The education at the school was excellent. A good many mercantile houses in the City used then to get their clerks at Christ's Hospital —a practice which, it is to be hoped, will be continued when the school is removed to Horsham, though out of sight is often out of mind—and writing, arithmetic, and other branches of a commercial education were taught very carefully. The elder boys had also the advantage of studying under a famous French

master, the late M. Delille, whose conversation classes, in which he himself played the principal part, were most enjoyable.

The Grecians lived quite apart from the rest of the boys. Each of them had a ward of fifty boys to look after, but had no more to do with them than a commissioned officer has with the rank and file of a regiment. There were twelve Grecians in the class, four new ones being appointed every year, and four going away to Oxford and Cambridge, where they had scholarships of £80 a year for four years given by the school. Each Grecian had a separate study and sleeping room, and they had a common room for the evening, enriched with a capital library bequeathed by an Anglo-Indian named Thackeray, one of the family of the famous novelist. They did not have their meals with the other boys, and were allowed to take breakfast and tea in their own rooms, on the condition well-known in the British army, that a soldier may have extra rations if he likes to pay for them. Luckily an unknown benefactor had left a considerable sum of money to provide, with the interest, pocket money for the Grecians, so

that we always had something to go on with, and we were allowed to take pupils whom we coached both in the school itself and in the City, for whom we charged an average fee of eight guineas a year, so that we had perhaps more money to spend than was quite good for us. We had perfect liberty to go out at all times after regular school hours, and occasionally could get leave till 11 o'clock at night to go to a theatre. The head master, Dr. Rice, loved the stage, and was well pleased that we should go to the Princess's to see Charles Kean in his revival of Shaksperian plays. I don't know that he would have been quite as well pleased if he had known that some of us went to see Charles Mathews and Miss Oliver in the *Game of Speculation*. It was a great delight in those days, when stalls were still unknown, to wait patiently for the first rush into the pit, and get seats in the front row next to the orchestra.

There was a well-known inn in Newgate Street which we sometimes frequented, the "Salutation," where there was a green room that had been sacred to the Grecians since the days of Coleridge, and at this inn we tasted the

forbidden fruit of billiard playing and skittles. In fact, we had far more licence than usually falls to the share of young men aged from 17 to 19. Dr. Rice, however, was very strict about work, and turned out some capital scholars. Out of only three Grecians who went to Cambridge we had the remarkable honour of winning the position of Senior Classic in two successive years. All the Grecians were expected to go in for honours, and as a rule they did so, having gone through at school the whole University course, so that they went up to college better equipped mentally than most men who have taken their degree.

So time passed pleasantly enough, and I had already been entered at Trinity, Cambridge, when circumstances made it necessary for me to give up a university career and to look about for the means of earning an immediate livelihood. I cannot say that this grieved me very much. I had always been of an adventurous disposition, and had great confidence in myself. I remember Dr. Rice once said to me, with regard to some boyish escapade, "You are the sort of fellow

who would get on very well in the colonies. If I were you that is the sort of life I should choose. What is the good of going to the University, and becoming a schoolmaster, and coming back here to teach for the rest of your days?" This was said in bitter irony, but I fancy the Doctor was also thinking somewhat sorrowfully of his own life, which had been spent in this fashion. Anyhow, I took my plunge into the world with a light heart. The Doctor wrote of me that I was "a good classical scholar and had considerable facility in English composition, and more general knowledge and a greater extent of modern reading than young men of his age can in general pretend to." The Head Mathematical Master bade me good-bye with tears in his eyes, and said that I had "gone through a comprehensive course of mathematics beyond most of my years." Armed with these testimonials I felt I could, like Vivian Grey and Ancient Pistol, treat the world as "mine oyster."

I had already written a few trifles for the *Leader*, at that time a remarkably independent London paper, and the very clever editor of the

Leader, Mr. E. M. Whitty, advised me to take up the career of a journalist. I learned shorthand, which fortunately I never had occasion to use, and soon obtained an appointment in the office of the *Newcastle Chronicle*, a newspaper with whose proprietor my family were acquainted, and a year afterwards, before I was twenty, I was promoted to the position of editor of that paper, which I held for three years. From that date till now, a period extending over 45 years, I have never ceased to play a more or less prominent part in the public life of the Empire. At Newcastle I counted among my intimate friends Mr. W. Bell Scott, the Pre-Raphaelite painter and poet, Dr. Thomas Hayle, and Mr. Joseph Cowen. At the latter's table I met all the chief democratic conspirators of Europe, whom Mr. Cowen at that time financed, such as Mazzini, Kossuth, and Garibaldi, and I had the perhaps questionable honour of shaking hands with Orsini, who was at that time collecting funds for some mysterious enterprise which was to set free the Continent, and which turned out to be the assassination of Napoleon III. When I left Newcastle in 1858 I had a

great dinner given me at which Mr. Cowen took the chair.

From Newcastle I went to Manchester for two years as a member of the editorial staff of the *Manchester Guardian*. The repeal of the "taxes on knowledge" had just made possible an immense development of English journalism, and Mr. J. E. Taylor, with a foresight which has since been most richly rewarded, bought out all his old partners in the *Guardian*, who dreaded making any change in their high-priced steady-going old property, and converted it into a penny daily paper.

At the end of 1859, when I had had five years' steady work as an English journalist and had written largely on both political and commercial affairs, I went out to India to take up the editorship of the *Bombay Gazette*. This position had been offered to me through Mr. Alexander Russel, of the *Scotsman*, one of the wittiest and most kind-hearted of men, who had previously recommended me to the proprietors of the *Manchester Guardian*. I had known nothing of Mr. Russel originally, but he wrote to me of his own accord saying he had observed my

articles, and asking if I would care to go to a new daily paper at Manchester. From that time we became firm friends, and many was the pleasant holiday I spent at his hospitable house in Ramsay Gardens, Edinburgh, near the Castle Gate, where the fishermen from "The Nest," on the Tweed, met on many jovial evenings. What I learnt chiefly at Manchester was to write intelligently on business matters, and to become a firm disciple of the gospel of Free Trade. Mr. Russel suggested to me that by going to India I might take up imperial questions, and so "lay down a double line of rails." It is difficult, however, to imagine a position more forlorn than that of an Indian journalist in those days, when there was no telegraph to Bombay and only a mail from England once a fortnight. Newspaper offices were badly organised and not too well provided with the means of undertaking new enterprises. Indian questions were unfamiliar and distasteful, and an editor too often found himself in the luckless state of being obliged to make bricks without straw. I soon found my employment so intolerable that I threw it

up, with the intention of returning to England. I had, however, made a good many friends, who persuaded me to try my fortune once again in India.

With their help I founded a weekly critical paper which I called the *Bombay Saturday Review.* In form it was closely modelled on its famous London prototype, but it gave much more prominence to commercial affairs, and in this respect was modelled upon the *Economist.* No venture of the kind had previously been started in India, and the new paper attracted much attention, and soon acquired considerable circulation and influence.

There happened at that time to be in Bombay, in connection with the founding of the new university, a band of highly intellectual and literary men, fresh from the English universities, where they had been selected among the most promising young men of the day. These men, including Sir Alexander Grant (himself an old *Saturday Reviewer*), Mr. E. J. Howard, Professor Hughlings, and Prof. Wordsworth, rallied round me and wrote regularly for my paper, and I also had the invaluable assistance

of such men as Sir George Birdwood and Sir Raymond West (of the Civil Service), while the Governor himself, Sir Bartle Frere, did not disdain to send me some occasional notes. I also had the occasional aid of that miracle of quaint learning and rhetorical vehemence and prolixity, the late Mr. Chisholm Anstey, who, after a meteoric career in the English House of Commons, passed the evening of his days as a practising barrister in Bombay.

Mr. Anstey had distinguished himself in the House of Commons by his attacks on the policy of Lord Palmerston, and everyone, therefore, was surprised when in the Pacifico Debate he rose and made a speech in which he defended the action of the Foreign Secretary. A few days afterwards, he told me, he received a card of invitation to one of Lady Palmerston's receptions at Cambridge House. Anstey consulted his old associate, David Urquhart, as to what he should do, but Urquhart denounced him as a renegade and told him he must take his own course. Anstey finally tore up the card. He went, however, the next week to a reception given by Lady Campbell, whose

husband was then Lord Chancellor, and his hostess took him across the room to introduce him to a lady, who, she said, particularly wished to make his acquaintance. This, of course, was Lady Palmerston, who made room for him to sit beside her on a couch, and remarked to him, "Now, Mr. Anstey, I see you go to the houses of the wives of other Cabinet Ministers, and I insist that you shall come to mine." In a day or two he received another card, and this time the invitation was not resisted. Anstey went, and was conquered. Lady Palmerston, when he was announced, took his arm and marched him up and down the room; and then, said Anstey, with a touch of grim humour, "my independence was gone for ever." It was not long before he accepted an appointment under the Crown as Attorney General at Hong Kong, where he at once got into hot water. It was said that Palmerston, on being asked why he had sent Anstey to Hong Kong, cruelly replied, "Well, if you could have told me of any other place a little further from London, I should have been happy to send him there."

Anstey's intractable temper left him almost without friends in Bombay. His gaunt, meagre figure, crowned with a stubble of stiff white hair, was not made more attractive by a pair of green goggles which he always wore. This suggested an amusing onslaught upon him by a witty Irish barrister, who was the exact autotype of Anstey, a jovial, amusing companion, named R. B. Barton, who sang a capital song and told a good story, and who had a very good practice at the Criminal Bar. He and Anstey were opposed to one another in a conspiracy case. Barton had no defence for his client, a little, round, fat man, so he ingeniously quoted the words Shakspeare puts into the mouth of Cæsar as to the harmlessness of men who are fat, and such as sleep of nights; and then, pointing a forefinger at Anstey, who sat, fuming with rage and scorn, he exclaimed, "Yond' Cassius hath a lean and hungry look. I wonder, gentlemen of the jury, did Cassius ever wear a barrister's gown and a pair of green spectacles?" *Risu solvuntur tabulæ.* The court was dissolved in laughter, and the defendant was triumphantly acquitted. Barton finally got a public appoint-

ment, and closed his career in Bombay as a very capable and popular Chief Magistrate.

Captain E. W. West, a member of the Political Department, whose promise of future distinction was cut short by a premature death, was also one of my most regular contributors. Mr. and Mrs. Lockwood Kipling, the parents of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who were then residents in Bombay, gave me frequent help. I had thus surrounded myself with colleagues who could really turn out first-rate work.

The Oxford men belonged to the new school which succeeded the pious era of Newman and Gladstone; they had not much faith in anything except intellectual freedom, and they took the keenest enjoyment in starting a university in which the youth of India could have a thoroughly godless education, and learn to value the principles of civil and religious liberty. I remember that Sir A. Grant sent me an essay by one of his best graduates, who recalled the days of the great Sivaji and Mahratta supremacy, and, in a spirit of patriotic fervour, asked if India, with her splendid memories, was always to be kept in subjection by a little island 6,000 miles away

in the Northern Seas; and Sir Alexander asked me if this was not an essay worthy of Milton in his youthful prime. The Government of India now, when it is much too late, deplores the licence of its universities, and would fain tame and tutor the rising generation to its will; but it is only reaping what it sowed.

Many a pleasant evening we spent in those days at the Byculla Club in symposia which were not unworthy to be classed with the "Noctes Ambrosianæ" of Christopher North; and here let me pay a passing tribute to the delightful society which flourished in India forty or fifty years ago. The Anglo-Indians of Bombay then formed a community of a democratic kind such as could not be found elsewhere. It comprised no old men or children, and comparatively few women. There were no millionaires or paupers. All menial offices were discharged by the native population. Every Englishman was comfortably off, had been well educated, and belonged either to the civil or military service of the crown, or to the mercantile or professional classes.

Everybody, therefore, lived on a footing of

perfect equality; intercourse was easy and pleasant, and there was none of the appalling snobbishness towards good society and people in high places which is the curse of London life, and which has been stimulated to a height never dreamt of even by Thackeray by the eager competition of American and Colonial capitalists anxious to make their way to the front. I suppose that for a parallel to such a community as then existed in Bombay it would be necessary to go back to the old Greek Republics. Conversation was very frank and outspoken, and criticism very prolific and enlightened, for the Government had not then thought it necessary, as they now have, to close the safety valve by formally prohibiting public servants, on pain of dismissal, from making any observations on the conduct of their superiors in office.

There were great merchants in those days who lived for many years in Bombay, kept great houses on Malabar Hill, and entertained in good style. Their place has now been taken by clerks who are mere agents for firms at home, or for the German or Greek houses

which everywhere do so much business under the British flag. Nothing surprised me so much, when I went back to India on a visit three years ago, than to find that the Europeans in Bombay had taken a back seat. All the best houses in the island were occupied by wealthy natives, and Englishmen seemed to possess nothing except the fringe of ground adjoining the harbour on which the Yacht Club is built. In my time the Englishman walked about Bombay as if he realised Goldsmith's description :—

"Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of humankind pass by."

The natives then occupied a distinctly inferior position, and they did not seem to resent it. Most of them had made money through English agency, and they looked up to the heads of the great firms, like Michael Scott, John Fleming, and Donald Graham, with pride and affection. They loved to give great entertainments in honour of their English friends, and never forgot them when the Englishmen came home. The feelings of good will between Englishmen and natives were much stronger and more last-

ing then than they are now, when there is much less of the feeling of fellowship between the two races.

My personal relations with leading natives were always of a pleasant character, and I made many friends among them, who, when I went to India in 1899, after nearly twenty years' absence, crowded round me, and gave me a cordial welcome. But I always opposed the political views of the ambitious young natives who dreamed of self-government for India, and so aroused the lasting resentment of the Maratha Brahmins of Poóna. The Parsees of Bombay, however, have cherished a warm feeling of gratitude towards me since I took up their cause against a mob that had wrecked their fire temples in 1874.

A good many of the Europeans lived in houses of their own, but many of them stayed at the Clubs, which were always a main source of attraction in the evening in a city which, as a rule, was destitute of theatrical performances. When we became more wealthy, we tried the experiment of importing an opera company from Italy, but it did not succeed. When I first

went out, soon after the Mutiny, the military element was much stronger than it afterwards became. There were twenty or more commissioned officers to every regiment, and their mess tents were the scene of much hospitality. They had the pleasant custom of inviting residents in Bombay to become honorary members of the mess, and on guest nights it was not unusual for forty or fifty men to sit down to dinner. I thus extended my acquaintance very largely, and became known to many of the men who afterwards made their mark.

When I first went out I struck up a friendship on board ship with a fellow-traveller, Dr. Ogilvie, who was Sir James Outram's literary right hand. He introduced me to Sir James, who talked to me very freely, and showed me all the minutes he had written against the scheme then on foot for transferring the local European regiments to the Crown. This scheme was a favourite one with the Prince Consort, who hated the idea of having an army in India which was not directly subject to the authority of the Crown, and it found great favour after the white

mutiny of the East India Company's European regiments, which had planned marching on Delhi and seizing the great arsenal at Ferozipore, because the Government would not pay them a bonus on re-enlistment when the Company, with whom their contract was, came to an end in 1859. The Government gave way, and the matter was hushed up; but Sir James Outram strongly urged that the system of sending out annual reinforcements of regular army battalions for a few years' service in India would never work, and that you must have seasoned soldiers for such duties, and recent experience of the complete breakdown of the short service system in India under the strain of even a small war has shown that he was right.

I also made the acquaintance at that time of another famous general, Lord Napier, who afterwards became Commander-in-Chief in Bombay, and finally for all India. He used to lay much stress to me on the fatal consequences of the system now in favour, by which public servants, both civil and military, are always running home on short leave to England. "Why," he said, "I served forty years in India before

I went home." He was strongly prejudiced, too, in favour of the old patronage system. The East India Directors, who enjoyed the patronage, were obliged, he said, for the sake of their own reputation, to pick out the most promising men they knew for India, and all the men who made a name during the Mutiny had entered the Service in this way.

The hero of that time in Bombay was Sir Hugh Rose, a man of iron will and immense energy, whose brilliant Central Indian Campaign had eclipsed the reputation of Lord Clyde. Sir Hugh looked more like a weary man of the world than a young lady's hero. His small army could not encumber itself with prisoners, and it was said that when men were taken in arms, the General used to give the order, "Take these men to the rear and shoot them." But the soldiers generally disarmed them and let them go. Another distinguished man I knew was Colonel Baird Smith, to whom, after John Nicholson, we may ascribe the capture of Delhi. He had just written for the Government of India an invaluable State paper on the results of the Famine in the North-west, and he made me a

convert, once and for all, to his theory that the way to salvation for the Indian ryot lay in a permanent settlement of the land revenue.

We had, therefore, plenty of grave political questions to occupy our thoughts. But events now hurried onward at a prodigious pace, and a sudden revolution took place in the fortunes of Bombay.

The American Civil War had just begun. The unprecedented demand which then arose for Indian cotton breathed new life into Bombay. Wealth beyond the dreams of avarice poured into the town; splendid buildings sprang up on all sides during the four years the war lasted; there was no speculation which the mercantile community was not ready to undertake; everyone became suddenly a millionaire; and existence followed as fast and furious a course as in California or Melbourne during the height of the gold fever.

One of the first fruits of this rush for wealth was the starting of scores of schemes for the acquisition of land and the building of great public works and docks. Sir Bartle Frere had given an impetus to such schemes by throwing

down the fortifications of Bombay and opening out an immense area of new building land, and his desire to create a new Bombay blinded him to the possible dangers of such a policy. The principal scheme concerned the reclamation of Back Bay, a false harbour on the western shore of the island. The whole community, European and native, went perfectly mad over the concessions granted by the Government for levelling and filling up Back Bay, and speculation rose to such an unheard of height that shares were actually sold at a profit of £2,500 before a load of gravel had been emptied into the bay. I made a considerable name for myself, and offended nearly all my personal friends, by denouncing this reclamation scheme as iniquitous, but the game went merrily on. The whole community was debauched, and the Governor, alarmed too late, warned members of the civil service to have nothing to do with it; but, as one high civilian said to me, "I have made more money out of these shares than I have saved during all my service in India, and I don't mean to give it up." All went well till suddenly, one day, Lee surrendered with his

whole army at Appomattox, and the American Civil War was at an end. Indian cotton fell at once from 24d. to 6d. a pound, and the whole fabric of speculation collapsed. Men who had been reputed millionaires, and to whom services of gold plate had been presented for their public services, were left penniless, the Bombay Bank fell with a crash, a dozen other banks followed suit, one firm after another went into liquidation, and so widespread was the ruin that the Government passed a special Act to relieve insolvents, and the lawyers swept up the débris.

So far as I was personally concerned my business prospered largely with the growth of the town, and I was thus enabled in 1864 to put down £15,000 for the purchase of the daily paper, the *Bombay Gazette*, of which I remained the proprietor till 1880, when I finally left India. Thus at the age of thirty I had become my own master, with a fair income and a good position, and I had now acquired what Gibbon calls "the first of earthly blessings, independence."

I had by this time learnt to feel myself quite at home in Bombay society, and had become

one of the most active members of the community. I always regard it as one of the most fortunate circumstances of my career that I had the honour to be reckoned among the intimate friends of Sir Bartle Frere, who from 1862 to 1867 held the office of Governor of Bombay. The singular simplicity and modesty of his character made him one of the most lovable of men, and at the same time he was most broad-minded and courageous in the views he took of political affairs, and had shaken himself entirely free from that spirit of monopoly which is the chief defect of the Indian Civil Service. There were no free institutions in Bombay—neither a Parliament nor a municipality; and the Government was a despotism, tempered only by the criticism of the newspapers. Sir Bartle Frere recognised the fact that Bombay possessed a considerable body of independent citizens—adventurers they were called in the old days,—barristers, solicitors, engineers, professors, merchants, and others, who had nothing to do with the administration of the town whose prosperity they created. He therefore enlarged the Bench of

Justices, which had a general supervision of local affairs, adding to it a considerable number of English and native gentlemen, and the consequence was an immediate outburst of public spirit which led to great changes and inaugurated a system of local self-government in India.

The Justices found fault with the expense and inefficiency of the autocratic government of the city, and after a debate which lasted over two weeks I carried a resolution censuring the Municipal Commissioner or Prefect of Bombay and calling upon the Government to grant to the citizens the right to manage their own affairs. As soon as this vote had been carried the Commissioner hurriedly left Bombay, and the Governor sent for me and asked my advice as to what ought to be done. I put forward a plan, which was afterwards adopted, for dividing the town into wards and entrusting the government to an elected municipality. In this municipality, which, with whatever drawbacks, has always done its work well, I subsequently became Chairman of the Town Council, and in this capacity I acted as

secretary of the Reception Committee when the Prince of Wales visited Bombay, and wrote the address presented to him when he landed and the farewell address he received before leaving India.

It was on the occasion of the Prince's visit that I brought out my *Guide to Bombay*, a historical and descriptive handbook for all Western India, from the time of the English Conquest to the present day. This book, which the Prince assured me he had read with interest, had a remarkable success, and has been continued as an annual ever since. One London paper said of it: "There is not, there never has been, and there never can be, a better book of its kind than *Maclean's Guide to Bombay*," and only this year I have had the pleasure of reading a glowing eulogy of the book in the *Daily News*, which described the *Guide* as "an admirable little work, still in its kind unsurpassed."

I have recalled these things, not in an idly pretentious or egotistical spirit, but to show that from early manhood I always was a man of business, and took a leading part in the discussion

and administration of public affairs in every community with which I was associated. It will be acknowledged by all residents in Western India that I organised in Bombay a public opinion such as existed nowhere else in India, and to which the Government itself was compelled to bow. This work was greatly facilitated by the existence in Bombay of a large commercial and professional class of non-official Europeans, and by the great variety and the progressive spirit of the native races inhabiting the town, who showed an independence to which the majority of their countrymen are strangers. On one occasion we succeded in holding a public meeting of Europeans and natives, some 5,000 strong, to protest against the action of the Government in levying an income tax from which Indian civil servants were exempted. A petition to Parliament which I had drawn up was unanimously adopted and ordered to be sent to Mr. Fawcett for presentation to the House of Commons, and the obnoxious law was soon afterwards repealed. This is the only instance of which I am aware of public opinion in India overcoming the authority of the Government.

As I have said above, other influences were at work to cause me not to give attention exclusively to matters connected only with Bombay, but to turn my mind to the study of Imperial affairs. Sir Bartle Frere was never happier than when he could talk to me for an hour in his library on the differences between himself and Lord Lawrence, and pull down books and maps to illustrate his frontier policy. I never saw him excited but once, and that was when I brought him some news about Egypt. He rose from his chair and paced excitedly up and down the room, exclaiming, "Ah! the Nile, the Nile. If we only had the Nile, we should be the masters of the world." I also had the advantage of seeing and conversing with most of the leading Anglo-Indian statesmen and generals who passed through Bombay, and who were glad to cultivate the press in the absence of the free institutions which exist in most other civilised countries. But, above all, I was indebted to one of the best libraries in the world, that of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay, of which I had the free range. The ten years of a

man's life from twenty to thirty are those which he can most profitably devote to study; and in India the absence of all the amusements which take up so much time in England give one ample leisure for reading. I simply devoured every book I could lay hands upon; and, from knowing nothing about Indian topics, I became quite familiar, for instance, with such a problem as the land settlement of India, which the great Anglo-Indians of forty years since wished to make general and perpetual, but which their puny successors have let slip out of remembrance. My apprenticeship to public life covered, therefore, a very wide area.

I have already referred to the visit of the Prince of Wales, which indirectly had the effect of greatly stimulating the circulation of Indian newspapers. Up to that time the number of copies sold by any of the daily papers was surprisingly small, though luckily the price was large and the advertisements were good, but from that date the native, as well as the European, public began to take a lively interest in public affairs. Another event which greatly increased the number of newspaper readers

was the deposition of the Gaekwar of Baroda on the charge of attempting to poison Colonel Phayre, and the State trial which took place at Baroda. The attempt on Colonel Phayre's life was first brought to light by the *Bombay Gazette*, and it created a prodigious sensation. The Government of India appointed a mixed commission of Europeans and natives to try the case, and Serjeant Ballantine came out specially to Bombay to defend the Maharaja Mulharrao, "that unhappy prince," as the serjeant persisted in calling him. It was understood that Serjeant Ballantine received a fee of £10,000 for the defence, which was not very ably conducted, and he promptly lost the whole of the money at Monte Carlo on his way home. The native judges hesitated to find the prisoners guilty, and the Government of India was forced to set them aside and to take the matter into its own hands.

A curious incident happened to myself in connection with the case. The native judges had come down to Bombay to settle what their verdict should be, and one morning Sir Frank Souter, the Commissioner of Police,

called at my house, and told me his detectives had found the native advocates for the defence were communicating secretly with the judges. I published this statement on my own authority, and was at once threatened with an action for libel. Then I received another visit from Sir Frank Souter, who entreated me not to publish his name, as that would ruin him. The only evidence I possessed was thus withdrawn from me, and I had no option left me but to apologize and withdraw the charge. My life has been one of perpetual controversy, but this is the only occasion on which I have ever found it necessary to make an apology, and this was done in the interest of the public service. The revelation I made was not without effect in determining the decision of the Government of India. The Viceroy of that day was Lord Northbrook, who did not pass for a strong man himself, but who had the advantage of being guided by a most capable Private Secretary, the present Lord Cromer, the natural force of whose political genius first found free play in India. It is extraordinary what a deep impression the character of Lord Cromer, then Captain Evelyn

Baring, made on every one who approached him, and how convinced all his friends and admirers in India were that he was destined to future greatness.

Another historical event of supreme international importance which recurred while I had control of the *Bombay Gazette* was the opening of the Suez Canal. This took place while I was in England, and I went to Egypt as one of the Khedive's guests to represent both my own paper and the *Manchester Guardian*. Mr. Russel, who represented the *Scotsman*, shared a cabin with me, and it delighted him to introduce me to our fellow-voyagers as one who did "bestride the narrow world like a Colossus," and had one foot in the old and one in the new world. I had been over the Canal works some months previously, having stayed a week in Egypt on my way home for the purpose. I went by boat along the Freshwater Canal from Suez to Ismailia along with Consul West, of Suez, an enthusiastic *canaliste*, and rode across the desert to see the *reversoir*, where the blue waters of the Mediterranean were pouring in to fill up the basin of the Bitter Lakes. This was

a truly inspiring sight, and struck one as far more suggestive than the completed canal itself, which is singularly tame and uninteresting.

The work done by the Canal is chiefly visible in the growing activity of its two termini, Suez and Port Said. Ismailia, too, has sprung into a place of some importance, and the Freshwater Canal is changing a large part of the desert between that place and Suez into cultivated ground. The festivities organised by Ismail Pasha in honour of the opening of the Canal were planned and carried out on a most magnificent scale. Cairo was at that time still the city of the Arabian Nights, and it was the pleasure of Ismail to conduct his revels in the style of one of the old Arabian Caliphs. A multitude of guests, ladies and gentlemen, had been brought out at his expense to Egypt, and representatives of all the crowned heads of Europe were present. There was the beauteous Empress Eugenie, of France, already tortured, as we know from her letters, by secret anxiety about the prospects of the Napoleon dynasty, but looking quite happy as she passed round the

ballroom at Ismailia, on the arm of the Crown Prince of Prussia, afterwards the ill-fated Emperor Frederick, who was to take a leading part, only a year afterwards, in the great war between France and Germany. This was the last friendly meeting of these two illustrious personages, for both of whom fate reserved so sad a destiny. The Khedive impressed all the resources of his kingdom to entertain his guests, who lodged, ate, and drank, drove about, and went up the Nile, at his expense, and many of whom took everything as a matter of course, never gave a thought to the poor people, and even grudged in many cases giving a silver coin or two to the Egyptians, whose personal services and fortunes had been commandeered for the occasion. The fellaheen must, I should say, be still paying interest on the millions the opening of the Canal cost Ismail.

But this Prince was a most masterful ruler, and his motto seemed to be, "after me, the deluge." During his reign Egypt became the happy hunting ground of all the speculators of Europe and America, and the

profusion and corruption which went on in Egypt drew to the great cities a host of adventurers, male and female, from all the States of Europe and the Levant. Crime was rampant among these people, and the surroundings in which they lived were unutterably vile. English rule has at least made Egypt more wholesome. Ismail, it used to be said, had a way of his own for getting rid occasionally of the profligacy of Alexandria. He would make a clean sweep of a few hundreds of the low Greeks who lived there, put them on board ship, and send them to sea, with orders to the crew to bore holes in the bottom of the ship and then make their escape.

I went to the opening of the Canal from Alexandria in an Egyptian steamer, which stuck fast on a sand bank after leaving Ismailia. Sir John Pender, whose yacht, the *Hawk*, immediately followed the French Empress's vessel, which led the procession, seeing our plight, sent back a boat, and invited a number of us whom he knew to go on board the *Hawk*. This we gladly did, and so had the pleasure of being present at the great dinner Sir John gave in the

evening to a large number of the most distinguished guests.

What seemed to me the most remarkable feature of the speeches at this banquet was the calm way in which most of the Englishmen present, who had actually passed through the Canal, were still quite sure that it could not be freely used by large ships and would never pay. Sir John Pender, with true commercial foresight, astonished them by saying, "Gentlemen, in ten years' time two thirds of the Eastern trade will pass through this Canal." Englishmen generally had the most obstinate prejudice against this great work. The Directors of the P. and O. Company scoffed at the Canal, and clung to their old-fashioned boats till the Company was nearly ruined. It was then that Mr. Thomas Sutherland, at that time the Company's agent at Hong Kong, found his opportunity. He sent home a memorandum showing the necessity of re-constituting the fleet, and building vessels to use the Canal. The Directors had the sense to take his advice, and called him home to take a seat on the Board. He quickly restored the fortunes of

the Company, became its chairman, and so gained his present commanding position in the world of commerce.

I have now recalled most of the leading incidents connected with my life in India. Busy as I had always been I pined, as most Englishmen in India do, for the broader and freer public life of England, and longed to measure myself against more formidable foes than I had encountered in the East. A good chance was offered me of selling the *Gazette* at a fair price, and I resolved to take advantage of it. My numerous friends in Bombay gave me a farewell dinner at the Byculla Club, at which about 150 gentlemen, including all the leading members of the English community, both civil and military, were present. I highly appreciated this compliment, as the distinction of being invited to a public dinner at the Byculla Club had never, up to that time, been conferred on any non-official Anglo-Indian. Sir Lyttleton Bayley, late Chief Justice of Bombay, was in the chair, and the Governor, Sir Richard Temple, made a long speech in my honour. An amusing incident occurred in connection with this speech. Sir

Richard described my disposition in the famous words of Milton's Satan—

"What though the field be lost?
All is not lost—the unconquerable will,
The courage never to submit or yield."

Talking with Sir Richard after the dinner I asked him, laughingly, why he had omitted the line—

"Immortal hate, the study of revenge."

This quite put him out, and he said to one of his staff (Dr. Waters), who had supplied him with the quotation, "I say, it was an awkward thing, Maclean knew those lines from Milton, and asked me why I had left out the 'immortal hate.'" As I have mentioned Sir Richard, the last Governor of Bombay in my time, I may as well say that he impressed me as one of the most kind-hearted and hospitable of men. In those days he was a man of indefatigable energy. He rode over the whole Presidency on horseback at a great pace, and hardly any of his staff were able to keep up with him. It was the common joke that the Government of India would be obliged to annex the Central Provinces to Bombay, because otherwise Sir

Richard Temple would not have room enough for his morning ride. The great mistake Sir Richard made as Governor of Bombay was to let break of gauge be introduced on the through railway to Delhi and the North-West. This may not matter much in time of peace, but, as Lord Napier pointed out, it might have the most disastrous effects in time of war. Consider what would be the state of affairs in South Africa, if, in addition to the evils of a single line, the military leaders were embarrassed with a break of gauge and the necessity for keeping a double set of rolling stock.

I cannot sum up the results of my work in Bombay better than in the flattering reference made to me by an old friend, Sir George Birdwood, in speaking last June at the Society of Arts as chairman of a meeting at which Mr. L. R. W. Forrest read a paper on "The Town and Island of Bombay":—

"The imperial position of Bombay is due first to Sir Bartle Frere, then to Mr. Arthur Crawford, and then to Mr. James Maclean, the ablest publicist we ever had in India, who,

gifted with a weighty and well-graced literary style, and the perfervid genius of his race, steadily magnified the name of New Bombay, gave it its inspiring motto, *Urbs prima in Indis*, and crystallised its progress in an incomparable guide to Bombay."

I may close this chapter of my life with a brief reference to my political faith. In the last year of my residence in India my attention was wholly engrossed by the warlike proceedings in which the Empire was engaged. Indian opinion is nothing if not critical, and pays very little regard to the party bonds which tie men up so tightly in England. I never considered in writing whether the views I advocated were those of Conservatives or Liberals. For the warlike policy of Lord Lytton, who showed as great rashness in sending British troops into Afghanistan as he showed precipitation in withdrawing them as soon as they suffered a check, I had no feeling but one of contempt; but, on the other hand, I was filled with admiration for the Imperial designs of Lord Beaconsfield and the determination with which he upheld them before the world. His motto, "Imperium et Libertas,"

seemed to me to indicate the real sources of England's greatness, and I resolved that, although my opinions on home politics and on questions of political economy were far more advanced that those of the still only half-educated Conservative party, I would cast in my lot with the politicians who accepted Mr. Disraeli as their leader. Such were my sentiments in the spring of 1880, when, having parted with my Bombay property, I made my way homewards, and heard at Rome that Mr. Disraeli had suddenly dissolved Parliament.

CHAPTER II.

Resolve to enter Parliament—Contest for the Elgin Burghs in 1880—Experience of Parliamentary Work in London—The Council of the National Union—Personal Relations with Lord Randolph Churchill—His Quarrel with Lord Salisbury—Letters from Public Men—Lord Randolph, Mr. W. H. Smith, Sir Bartle Frere—Lord Salisbury—Mr. E. Stanhope—Lord G. Hamilton.

II.

The news of the dissolution of Parliament reached me, as I have said, at Rome. I had made up my mind to take the first opportunity that came within my reach to try my fate in public life, and I wrote at once to Mr. Stanhope, then Under Secretary for India, to ask him if he could find me a vacant seat to contest. Mr. Stanhope telegraphed to me to come over at once, but in a letter he wrote me he took a more guarded tone, said that all the best chances had already been snapped up, and warned me that whatever was left would be not much better than a forlorn hope. This rebuff did not frighten me, as I had resolved that I must make my name known at any cost. I found on reaching London that there was a deputation waiting to press me to go down and contest the Elgin Burghs against Mr. (now Sir M. E.) Grant Duff. I knew nothing of the far north of Scotland, but was sufficiently familiar with politics to be aware that in such a constituency the success of a Conservative candidate was

quite hopeless. However, I set out for Aberdeen with a light heart, and found that the Conservatives there—unfortunately they were like the British infantry, there were too few of them —were eager to welcome a bona-fide candidate, whom they had never expected to see, as if he had been an angel from heaven. The Elgin Burghs constituency is a long and straggling one, stretching from Elgin on the west to Peterhead, at the extreme north-east end of Scotland. I found that the electors, with the exception of some retired people living on their income in Elgin, were violently Radical. At several places I was mobbed and pelted with flour, and at Peterhead an attempt, only frustrated by a stalwart prize-fighter who had taken the precaution to go down to the pier with me, was made to throw me into the sea. The custom of taking the candidate round for a personal canvass still prevailed in this primitive community, and I shall not readily forget the back-hander I received from a well-to-do tradesman who, when I was introduced to him, looked me carefully up and down and then quietly remarked, "Weel, I think ye might be better employed,"

a prophecy which the result of the poll showed to have been well founded. Another elector, of a more polite turn, gave utterance to a general sentiment when he said to me, regretfully, "Oh! y're no a Leeberal," as if that were a conclusive answer to every argument. In those days—I do not know if it is the case now—Scotchmen lived in a perpetual state of awe of some great proprietor in the neighbourhood, whose opinions and wishes were quoted as if they had been decrees of Providence In the Elgin Burghs the Earl, now the Duke, of Fife, was the Cock of the North; and, as he was at that time as fervent a Gladstonian as Lord Rosebery in the south, it is no wonder that the name of Mr. Disraeli was held in as great detestation as if he had been the Evil One himself. One cannot help smiling at the thought that within a few years' time the Duke of Fife and Sir M. E. Grant Duff became pillars of that Liberal Unionism which now, we are told, dominates the whole north of Scotland. On the whole, my time during the three weeks the election lasted was spent pleasantly enough. I had capital meetings, and

made a great stir by airing opinions which the dour Scotchmen had never so much as heard of; and the great people on our own side made much of me, the Earl and Countess of Seafield inviting me to stay for a week at Cullen Castle, and the late Lord Errol driving into Peterhead and insisting that I should go and spend the Saturday to Monday at his picturesque home in Slaines Castle, which is built into the granite rocks and washed by the surges of the North Sea. The chiefs of the Conservative party in Scotland were so well pleased with the results of my adventure that they wrote a strong letter in my behalf to London; and the result was that in the spring of 1880, nearly six years before I entered Parliament, I received a letter from the Carlton Club saying that the Committee had placed my name on the list of the ten members they are authorised to select every year. This was in the præ-Hooley era, when it was still a high distinction to be selected as a member of the greatest political and social club in London; and I accepted the compliment as one of which any man might well be proud.

I now grew intimate with most of the leading

Conservatives in London, and had a good many tentative proposals made to me to stand for different constituencies. Finally I accepted an invitation from the electors of Oldham to become one of their candidates; and I sat down patiently to the siege of that borough, and laboured most assiduously at this work up to the general election of 1885, when I was successful in capturing the seat. At that time the Conservative reaction had not made any remarkable progress in Lancashire, and I remember that Sir Stafford Northcote made some discouraging reference to "even Radical Oldham" just at the time when I first came before the constituency, I always considered, however, that a politician who had any ambition in him could distinguish himself and do good service to his party, better by undertaking to fight a large constituency which had been held by the enemy, than by looking out for one of those safe seats which are usually reserved for the spoilt children of fortune; and I had no reason to regret the consequences of my enterprise in Oldham.

But before I speak of my experience there I

must refer to one or two political incidents of importance which happened in 1884, the year before the election. About the middle of this year, 1884, I was surprised one day to receive a letter from a gentleman whom I had known in India, and who held a high position in the English Civil Service, asking me if I could come and see him about a matter which he did not care to write about. I called, as desired, and after beating about the bush a little my friend asked me what I thought of Lord Randolph Churchill, who was at that time making himself famous and putting new life into the dry bones of the Conservative party all over the country by the freedom and point of his criticisms on "the old gang" who then led the party. I expressed my feelings on the subject pretty warmly, as I thoroughly agreed with the late Colonel Burnaby, who in a conversation I had with him about this time said to me, "Randolph is the coming man. You know that as well as I do." My friend then proposed that I should attend a meeting Lord Randolph intended to call at his house of friends on whom he could rely. To this I agreed, and,

having soon afterwards received a cordial invitation from Lord Randolph himself, I was present at several meetings at which his projects were discussed, and promised to help him all I could. I found that his immediate aim was to be elected a member of the National Union, and then to become Chairman of the Council. The Union was just then struggling to gain an independent existence, and Lord Randolph thought that if he could obtain for it a large grant from the party funds and set it free from the yoke of the party Whips he might weld the Council into a powerful political organisation strong enough to set the "front-bench men" at defiance. I was myself at this time a member of the Council, having been persuaded to join it by Mr. W. H. Smith, who told me I might be of use in advising upon the drawing up and circulation of Conservative pamphlets and leaflets.

One of my first duties as a member of the National Union Council was to write, at Mr. Smith's request, a paper which I entitled "The Story of the Transvaal," for circulation by the Conservative party. I was humiliated and indignant at Mr. Gladstone's surrender after

Majuba, and my old friendship with Sir Bartle Frere, who, however, was as shabbily treated by Sir M. H. Beach as by Mr. Gladstone, made me feel the blow all the more keenly. Mr. Smith, to whom I sent a copy, made me the following acknowledgment :—

LETTER FROM W. H. SMITH.

3, GROSVENOR PLACE,
April 29th, 1882.

MY DEAR MACLEAN,

I will not alter a line of this, but it has been suggested that it would be more telling and effective if the matter was broken up into paragraphs with little headings, something after the American newspaper practice. We want to catch the eye of the indifferent working man, and he must be attracted to read.

Will you let me know at what price per 1,000 they can be procured.

I think we might distribute 100,000 at least with effect.

Your other brochure is the best political satire I have seen for a long time. What steps have been taken to circulate it?

Yours very truly,
W. H. SMITH.

Sir Bartle Frere was then in England, and I enclosed a copy of the paper to him. I give

his long and interesting reply in full, because it may be considered historical :—

LETTER FROM SIR BARTLE FRERE.

February 22nd, 1883.

DEAR MACLEAN,

Your note of the 19th has just reached me here. I am very glad to hear that there is a call for the continuation of the excellent paper you wrote on the Transvaal, and I think you could not do better than republish it, as it stands, and add a postscript showing the "Results of the Surrender."

The Convention, under which the Transvaal was given up, stipulated for many things to be done by the new Government of the Republic, none of which have yet been accomplished, and for the most part they have not been attempted. The chief reason given for retaining a British "Suzerainty" (whatever that may imply) over the Transvaal, was that it would be some protection to the 700,000 loyal native subjects, against any aggression by the Boer Government. It has not, however, been of the slightest use for that or any other visible purpose. The natives scattered among the European farms have been reduced to the condition of serfdom in which we found them before the annexation. Mapock and other chiefs to the East and North-east, who had been loyal to British rule, have been attacked; great numbers of their followers have been slaughtered; a large "Commando," said to comprise 2,000 Burghers, with two cannon supplied

by the Cape Government, is at present engaged in crushing this tribe, blowing up their caves with dynamite. Their greatest offence is fidelity to the British Government. To the South-west, tribes beyond the Transvaal boundary as fixed by the Convention are being attacked by Boer commandos, and the Chiefs who had been loyal to the British Government are being despoiled of their lands (*vide* "Bechuanaland," of which a copy is enclosed), whilst their people are murdered in cold blood. The Transvaal Government, when appealed to, say "the country is beyond their jurisdiction." To the natives of Transvaal and its neighbourhood, the surrender by the British Government has brought loss of all security for liberty, life, or prosperity.

To the white population of the Transvaal the consequences of surrender have been scarcely less disastrous. Though many months have passed since the Convention was signed no settled government has yet been organised. None of the promises to pay debts or indemnities have yet been performed. The English banks have withdrawn, following a large proportion of the loyal settlers, and the only districts where industry is not paralysed are the gold fields, to which there has been of late a considerable immigration of diggers, amongst whom it will require a strong government to keep order.

This stagnation seriously affects the neighbouring British colonies of Natal and the Cape, where trade suffers, and where the loyal party have not recovered

from the disgrace and alienation consequent on the abandonment by the British Government of the loyal party in the Transvaal; so that in short it cannot be said that either in the Transvaal or in our older colonies any benefit has resulted from the pusillanimous conduct of the British Government either to Europeans or natives. We have got nothing to show as a set off for our disgraceful loss of character.

I hope you will be able to abbreviate this sad story, and that you will send me a few copies, and believe me

Very truly yours,

H. B. E. FRERE.

I did not follow up Sir Bartle's suggestion, because it was not expedient to go so fully into detail, and the British public was already beginning to grow weary of the whole business. But it seemed to me at that time that England could easily have upheld the annexation, and that, the contest between the two nations having been so brief, Dutch and English would soon have settled down and lived together in harmony. But the Government of the day thought otherwise. It bound England by a convention to restore freedom to the Boers, and confirmed this concession by a stronger bond in 1884, and the charge against the present Government is that they did

not observe these international obligations, but entered into a conspiracy with Mr. Rhodes to upset the freedom of the nation to which England herself had voluntarily given independence.

I did not write many more papers for the Conservative party, as I had much profitable literary work to do, and could not spare the time for amateur pamphleteering. This may be the place to mention that, after I became my own master in Bombay, I spent much time in England and in foreign travel, and did not give myself up entirely to holiday-making but tried to do some literary work in London besides. I knew Mr. Meredith Townsend, of the *Spectator*, who had had experience of Indian journalism and showed me much civility, and through him I became acquainted with his colleague, Mr. R. H. Hutton. It gave me much pleasure, one morning, to receive the following cordial letter from Mr. Hutton :—

LETTER FROM MR. R. H. HUTTON.

The *Spectator* Office,
July 25, 1866.

DEAR MR. MACLEAN,

Could you not write for us sometimes? Your

help would be very useful to us occasionally, and your co-operation very pleasant. I am going away for a month's holiday. Could you call to discuss articles for the week while I am away; and if you stay during September, when I shall be here alone, I hope you will help me. And, after we are both back, I think it is likely we shall still be glad of some regular help from you.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

R. H. HUTTON.

I took advantage of this opportunity to contribute some articles to the *Spectator*, and I also wrote, in a desultory fashion, for other well-known papers. I remember that Mr. Hutton at that time introduced me to Mr. George Smith, the proprietor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which was then enjoying the full splendour of its early success. Mr. Smith, afterwards better known as the founder of that great work, the *Dictionary of National Biography*, remarked to me, after Mr. Hutton had left the room, "Ah! if you would write leaders like Richard Hutton's, I would come to you with my hat in my hand." Such a compliment indicates the extraordinary and well-deserved distinction Mr. Hutton had won

as a journalist. For my own part, I soon found that, as the success of my paper in Bombay depended largely on personal supervision, it was necessary for me to make frequent visits to India, and that, in these circumstances, I could not hope to form any permanent literary connexion in England. After I finally left India in 1880, I bought an interest in the *Western Mail*, which secured to me the right to express my own opinions in that paper. For about twenty years I wrote a weekly letter of some two columns which attracted a good deal of attention, and was largely instrumental in bringing about that Conservative reaction in South Wales which was one of the distinguishing features of the general election of 1895. But an eminent journalist, who is still, happily, a member of the House of Commons, once very wisely said to me, "You will find that you cannot be both a journalist and a member of Parliament. The two occupations are bound to clash with one another." So it turned out with me. The freedom of my criticisms, after the election, on the management of South African affairs provoked a feeling of warm hostility among my

constituents, which gradually made things at Cardiff uncomfortable, and ultimately intolerable for me. But I have noticed this peculiarity about the South African war, that a great many estimable people in England absolutely refuse to discuss it in a reasonable spirit. When it is mentioned they consider it a sacred duty to fly into a fit of patriotic fury, and will not listen to a word of explanation or remonstrance.

My attention was now more and more taken up with the intrigue for mastery which distracted the National Union Council. My friendship with Lord Randolph continued, and on December 15th, 1883, he wrote to me as follows :—

LETTER FROM
LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

December 15th, 1883.

DEAR MR. MACLEAN,

I have to thank you very much for your most able statement on the Ilbert Bill, which you have been kind enough to send me, and I will endeavour, on the first suitable opportunity, to avail myself of the information. I am going to a meeting at Blackpool in January, and think that will be a good occasion to allude to Indian affairs.

The next meeting of the National Union Council

will be on Friday, February 1st, and it is likely to be an important one. I should be very glad if you will meet a few of our friends at luncheon here on that day. The Organisation Committee, which was appointed at the last meeting, has decided on requesting an interview with Lord Salisbury. Lord Salisbury has consented to the interview, which will take place early in January.

Believe me to remain,

Yours very sincerely,

RANDOLPH T. CHURCHILL.

All went well for a time, and I assisted in getting Lord Randolph elected as Chairman of the Council and in passing some motions directed against the Stafford Northcote section of the party; but it soon became apparent that Lord Randolph's ambition did not stop here, and that nothing would satisfy him short of taking the whole control of the party organisation out of the hands of Lord Salisbury. Now personally I had always been a firm believer in Lord Salisbury. I had backed up Lord Randolph because I wished to overthrow the dual control of Salisbury and Northcote, which had been established after the death of Lord Beaconsfield, and which was a source of

divided councils and weakness in action, but I had never contemplated the supersession of Lord Salisbury as leader of the party.

In many respects Lord Randolph was the more attractive of the two leaders. Though aristocratic in his habits, he was thoroughly democratic in his sentiments, and he had that popular instinct which makes men public favourites. He had, too, that perfect fearlessness in attacking not merely Mr. Gladstone but his own leaders in the House of Commons as well, which commands admiration and strikes terror. You could guess the man's character by seeing him walking in the Park with quick, eager, impetuous step, swinging his cane before him, and looking as if the world were his football, which he was kicking along Rotten Row. There can be no doubt that Lord Salisbury's colleagues in the House of Commons were completely cowed by Lord Randolph, and did not know how to deal with him. One of them stopped me in the street and said to me, "I believe you are one of Lord Randolph's great friends. I wish you would find out what he wants. Anything he desires we will do for him,

if only he will work cordially with the party." All my inclinations, therefore, were favourable to Lord Randolph. But I had a great respect and esteem for Lord Salisbury, whose public services I recognised and whose claims on public confidence were only marred by his haughty reserve and by the intellectual scorn which made him often blurt out plain truths which perplexed and disconcerted his followers.

The Prime Minister is personally a very broad-minded man. He likes to talk frankly even on matters of high politics with anyone who he thinks has really made a study of public affairs, and he is pleased with the impact of a fresh mind upon his own. But even when he seems to be most careless in conversation his intelligence is wide awake, and he pounces mercilessly on any slip made by the person he is talking to. While, too, he is very free in the expression of his opinions, he always reserves his authority, and is firmly convinced that the caste to which he belongs has the sole right to rule the country.

I· hesitated a long time whether I should go with Lord Randolph all the way or not,

but finally I shrank from the confusion which would be caused by a domestic revolution in the Conservative party, and I gave notice of a motion in the National Union Council which virtually upheld Lord Salisbury's power. By this time the antagonism between Lord Randolph and Lord Salisbury had been publicly declared, and it is a curious fact, which shows how blood is thicker than water, that Mr. Arthur Balfour, who had been one of Lord Randolph's associates in the Fourth Party, became one of his chief opponents as soon as Lord Salisbury's position seemed to be endangered. Before we came to open strife in the Council I attended one day a meeting of Lord Randolph's friends, at which I arrived before any of the others. Lord Randolph entered immediately afterwards, and, coming up to me, pulled out of his pocket a roll of manuscript, which turned out to be a long letter to Lord Salisbury, and which was afterwards published in the newspapers. This he read to me with much emphasis, saying at the end, "I think Lord Salisbury has grossly insulted me." I could not help remarking in reply, "Well, you have paid him out in his own coin."

He gave me a quick look, and then began a coolness between us which ended in estrangement. Lord Randolph announced that if any motion were carried by the Council he would resign the chairmanship, and great efforts were made on both sides to secure votes for the critical division. Lord Randolph wrote me a long and impassioned appeal, in which he stated that Lord Salisbury had been on the point of giving way, but had now determined to wait for the result of the division. This, however, did not move me. I had not consulted Lord Salisbury or anybody else in the matter, but was simply doing what I thought best for the interests of the whole party.

To make the narrative quite clear, I append the letters which now came to me fast and furious from Lord Randolph.

LETTER FROM
LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

April 29th, 1884.

DEAR MR. MACLEAN,

I think it right to tell you what has been the effect of your notice of motion being placed on the agenda paper for the next meeting of the N. U. Council on Friday. Since the last meeting negotia-

tions have been actively proceeding between members of the Executive Committee, and the leaders, whips, and Central Committee. I have taken no personal part in those negotiations beyond saying that I would agree to anything which offered an honourable *modus vivendi* to the N. U. consistently with the resolution of the Birmingham Conference. Those negotiations had reached such a point that all our reasonable demands were practically conceded; the organisation of the party, as far as associations were concerned, was to be left to the N. U.; the circulation of literature, information, and the provision of and arrangements for lectures and speakers likewise left to the National Union. A definite sum of money from the party funds, I believe £3,000, was to be given to us for those purposes, and an arrangement was to be made by which the chief whip of the party in the House of Commons was to have a seat on the Council. Several prominent members of the party interested themselves in this matter, and supported the views of the Council. This compromise would have been formally agreed to at the meeting of the Central Committee to-day at Lord Salisbury's house, but for Lord Salisbury's declaration that his attention had been drawn to your notice of motion, and he would agree to nothing till it had been discovered whether that motion was successful or not in breaking up the party in the Council. If you put down your notice of motion from an independent standpoint, I think it right you should know this.

If, on the other hand, it was put down by you in consequence of suggestions from Stanhope, Percy, &c., then you have attained all the success you could wish for. I cannot, however, assume this latter contingency, because all along you have supported the majority in the Council so loyally, and have communicated with me so frankly and fully on all matters which have come before the Council, that I feel sure you would not lend yourself to interested and personal intrigues for the purpose of baffling the Council of the N. U. and of ultimately destroying the N. U. This, however, will be the effect of your motion if carried on Friday, which will necessitate what I have been most anxious to avoid, an appeal to the public to pronounce on the present organisation of the Conservative party. I know you would wish me to write as frankly to you as you have done to me on more than one occasion, and that is my excuse for this letter.

Yours very truly,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

LETTER FROM
LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

April 30th.

DEAR MR. MACLEAN,

I can assure you the facts are as I stated them in my letter of yesterday, because one of the Central Committee related them to ——. Lord Salisbury and his friends know perfectly well that you have been one of the firmest and most influential supporters of the

majority on the Council, and the moment they saw your notice they naturally concluded there was a split in the majority, and with their usual bad faith broke off negotiations. After all, what is your resolution? It is a motion of want of confidence in the Executive Committee, and particularly in the Chairman. I could not treat it otherwise. It is no use appointing an Executive Committee if you at once appoint a committee to supersede the executive one, which is practically what your motion would do. However, I shall hope to see you at luncheon on Friday, and talk over the matter with you. It would be a great pity, however, if all our long struggle were to be abortive at the last moment owing to a slight want of dignified determination to attain what are our undoubted rights.

Yours very faithfully,

RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

I had by this time been approached by the late Mr. Stanhope, representing "the old gang." The chief obstacle to a reconciliation, I found, lay in the suspicions the two parties had regarding each other's good faith. Lord Randolph, it will be seen from Letter No. 2, gives very free utterance to his sentiments, but the more cautious Mr. Stanhope was equally prejudiced against Lord Randolph. This is made quite clear from the following letter:—

LETTER FROM MR. E. STANHOPE,

23, Eccleston Square,
March 19th, 1884.

DEAR MR. MACLEAN,

Many thanks for your letter, which largely represents my own opinion. May I remind you, however, that not one single word has ever been said to the Central Committee by the Council since the commencement of their unfortunate discussions in the autumn.

Had we ever been approached, I, for one, am quite ready to urge that approaches should be met in a friendly spirit. But, from first to last, the avowed object of Lord Randolph has been not to work on friendly terms with any Central Committee, but to crush it, if he could.

One word more of explanation.

When you speak of the meeting held last year, and say that no member of the Council was asked to it, you cannot, I think, be aware of the nature of the meeting. We asked only the Chairmen of the Central Committees, or whatever you call the organisation, in every borough and county. If we had approached the Associations generally, without also asking your Council, you would have had a right to complain.

The Central Committee, which is nominated by the leaders of the party, and entrusted by them with important functions, cannot afford to request assistance in its work from any quarter. We certainly should never do so. And if you can induce Lord Randolph

and Mr. Gorst to approach Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford with a desire to assist and not to oppose them, I see no reason why a *modus vivendi* should not be established which would recognize the value of the National Union, and give it adequate and distinct functions in harmony with the leaders of the party.

You are aware, of course, that the present position of the Union was that established by Mr. Gorst, when he was the paid member of the Central Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Union.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

EDWARD STANHOPE.

If you wish it, I should be glad to see you any day except Thursday. Do come.

As I wished, if possible, to reconcile the two hostile forces, I accepted this appointment, and finally, after a long conversation with Mr. Stanhope, he wrote to me enclosing the following memorandum as a sort of ultimatum :—

I have fully explained the purport of our conversation to-day to Lord Salisbury and Sir S. Northcote. They are of opinion that a basis of arrangement may be arrived at, and can best be accomplished by a conference between two or three of their representatives, and two or three members of your Council ; and they would suggest that steps should be taken at your meeting to-morrow for carrying this into effect.

To this Lord Randolph curtly responded that it was "all d——d nonsense," and nothing remained but to press the matter to a division.

My motion was carried, Lord Randolph resigned, and then the local associations throughout the country, with the late Sir A. B. Forwood as their representative, took the question up and demanded Lord Randolph's reinstatement. Finally an appeal to the whole body of Conservative electors was resolved upon. A great meeting was held at Sheffield, where Lord Randolph carried his own list of candidates by a small majority, but at the same time most of us who had opposed him were also returned to the Council, and it became evident to him that he could not have his own way. He then made a very clever move. He saw Mr. Arthur Balfour and said he was tired of all this wrangling and wished to be on friendly terms once more with Lord Salisbury. Mr. Balfour, nothing loth, undertook the part of mediator, and Lord Salisbury invited all the members of the Council to a dinner in Arlington Street, at which it was announced that Sir M. Hicks-Beach would be the new chairman, and a reign

of peace was established for ever. This was the euthanasia of the National Union Council, which has never since been of any use.

It may be convenient here to state what was my subsequent connection with Lord Randolph. Though of a very capricious temper, he was not wanting in magnanimity, and in 1886, when he had been appointed leader of the House of Commons and I had been elected for the second time member for Oldham, I was surprised to get a cordial letter from him inviting me to second the Address at the opening of Parliament. Here are two letters from him on this subject:—

LETTER FROM
LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

August 10th, 1886.

DEAR MR. MACLEAN,

At Lord Salisbury's request I write to ask you if you will undertake the duty of seconding the address in answer to the Queen's speech which will be moved on Thursday, the 19th, by Colonel King Harman.

It is in accordance with the practice of our party that the address should be moved by a county member and seconded by a member of an important borough constituency.

On the coming occasion the difficulty of successfully discharging the task will be rather greater than usual,

for the Queen's speech, I may state to you in confidence, will be extremely brief, and will have reference solely to the remaining business of supply.

Of course the address and the speeches in support of it must be almost entirely of the same nature, nor should any opening be given to the enemy to introduce wide controversial matter about Ireland, unless they are prepared to take the extreme course of moving an amendment to the address, in which case naturally we should be delighted to meet them.

Lord Salisbury is anxious that the business should be undertaken by one who, like yourself, has experience of Parliament and public affairs rather than, as is often the case, by some new member.

Will you let me have a line in reply to No. 2, Connaught Place, London, W.

Believe me to be,

Yours very truly,

RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

LETTER FROM

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

August 12th, 1886.

MY DEAR MR. MACLEAN,

I am much obliged to you for your letter, and much pleased that you consent to discharge the duty of seconding the address. If I can be of any use to you in giving information please command me.

Believe me to be,

Yours very faithfully,

RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

On this subject he had very clear and good ideas of what ought to be done. I went to take his instructions at the Treasury, and he impressed upon me the necessity of avoiding, in a speech on a ceremonial occasion, all matters of controversy, and said I should prepare a speech which would be, as the French say, *bien senti*. He had not, however, lost sight of the check I gave him in 1884, and once, when I thwarted him in the House on some Indian question, he so far forgot himself afterwards in conversation as to reproach me with having betrayed him. I said, "Well, at all events I never got my thirty pieces of silver," and he laughed and held out his hand, saying that was quite true. We afterwards became pretty good friends again.

His resignation took all his friends by surprise, and a public man who was probably more in his confidence than anyone else told me he knew nothing about the matter till, driving away from the City with Lord Randolph, he said something laughingly about the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord Randolph replied, "I don't know if I am Chancellor of the Exchequer, for I resigned this morning." This step was

due to a miscalculation. Lord Randolph believed that the Government could not get on without him, and when Mr. Goschen joined the Ministry all his plans were upset. I wrote to him expressing my regret at what had happened, and received the following answer :—

LETTER FROM
LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

January, 12th, 1887.

DEAR MR. MACLEAN,

I am much obliged to you for your letter and enclosure. The fair manner in which you expressed yourself on the matter of my resignation is in perfect accordance with what I have always observed as to your general attitude on all political questions.

It would be well if a similar fairness was more diffused among our modern politicians.

Believe me to be,

Yours very truly,

RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

I happened to sit next him at dinner soon afterwards. He was full of the subject, and talked to me with his usual frankness and fluency. It would, he said, be a great mistake to suppose that there had been only one point of difference between himself and Lord Salisbury ; they were at issue on

many questions of public policy. "As regards foreign affairs, for instance," added Lord Randolph, "I saw him day after day and tried to impress upon him that the English people were unalterably opposed to a strong foreign policy." I could not help thinking to myself how bitterly Lord Salisbury would resent this interference by another Minister with a department which was peculiarly his own. But I merely said that the situation had always reminded me of what took place before the battle of Salamanca, when Wellington and Marmont manœuvred against one another for some days, and at last Marmont made a slip and Wellington shut up his field-glass, exclaiming "Marmont's lost." He admitted the aptness of the comparison. It occurred to me that he would be sorry the next morning that he had spoken to me so freely, so, to change the subject I asked him, as he had become a great sportsman, what he thought of the poisoning of Orme, This brought forth a characteristic outburst: "Oh!" said Lord Randolph, "it's that Duke of Westminster. He thinks he has a divine right to win races, and that his horses shouldn't be ill like other people's

Depend upon it, I have seen as much of Dukes as anybody ; they are the greatest set of fools Heaven ever created, not excepting even the 'Royalties.'"

Despite the impending collapse of his health, Lord Randolph hoped to be restored to the leadership, and he had many warm partisans who worked zealously on his behalf. I always looked upon him as a beaten man when he finally resolved not to contest one of the seats at Birmingham. Lord Randolph had at first consented to go down, and he actually asked myself and some other members to go with him and make a platform for him. Strong influences were, however, brought to bear against him. Mr. Chamberlain was thoroughly alarmed at the threatened intrusion of Lord Randolph into his own preserves ; and the latter was persuaded to refer the matter to the arbitration of a committee on which the Liberal Unionist influence prevailed, and, of course, the decision went against him. Lord Randolph retired, and from that moment his star paled before that of Mr. Arthur Balfour.

Looking back now on the circumstances of

the time, I see clearly that if Lord Randolph had not been checked on the National Council Lord Salisbury's position would have become intolerable, and Lord Randolph, already very popular with the rank and file of the party, enjoying an immense aristocratic connexion, and having an unlimited command of money, for the men who held the strings of the money-bags had secretly promised him support, would have become the undisputed chief of the party. But Lord Salisbury always displayed perfect unconsciousness that such a crisis had arisen.

Such are the advantages of a diplomatic training.

CHAPTER III.

Elected for Oldham in 1885—Impressions of the House of Commons.

III.

Lord Salisbury took office very reluctantly, and only yielding to the importunities of his friends, in 1885, and a general election was held in the autumn of that year. On this occasion the electors of Oldham repaid me for my careful nursing of the constituency by returning me to Parliament. I had not got on with them very well at first. Coming among them a complete stranger, with neither wealth, a family name, nor local connection to recommend me, I was at first stiff and awkward in addressing them. Mr. Hilton Greaves, the capable but eccentric chief of the Conservative party in Oldham, said to me after my first meeting. "I dare say you will like to know what these people say about you. They say, 'He is a clever fellow, no doubt; but he would do with waking up a bit.'" I took the hint, and woke up accordingly, with such effect that I became a popular favourite and was called affectionately by the men of Oldham "The Old Champion." Nor, although I was rejected in 1892 after having been twice elected for the borough, did I ever lose the good will of the

working men of Oldham, towards whom I have always cherished a kindly feeling, and who, I am convinced, resented the action of the two or three small cliques who worked against me.

I do not think there is any pleasure in life to be compared with the joyful excitement which thrills one's whole being when one is for the first time elected to Parliament to represent a great popular constituency. I did not feel the same emotion afterwards, either at Oldham or at Cardiff, but in 1885 I would not have changed places with any man in England. One of the chief ambitions of my life had been fulfilled, and as member for Oldham I could speak with authority in the assembly that ruled the Empire. Some of my friends wanted me after the election to leave the Town Hall by a side entrance, as the square in front was filled with a shouting Radical mob, but I replied "No, I am the member for Oldham, and I am going out by the front door," and I went down into the midst of them. There was a rush, and I was carried off my feet, but my friends and a strong guard of policemen gathered round me, and I was half dragged down Clegg-street to the

Conservative Club, and then hoisted on men's shoulders and run up the stairs, breaking down the balusters on the way, to the Committee-room, where I was shovelled on to the table. The delirious excitement of the gathering at the Club and of the meetings that greeted me on my way home through the town can never be forgotten.

I took very easily to Parliamentary life, having the business already at my fingers' ends, and found I could spend my time at Westminster very agreeably. I had many congratulations, and Lord Salisbury wrote me a special letter of thanks, warmly appreciating the good work I had done. Annexed is his lordship's letter, and also one from Lord George Hamilton, with whom I was much better acquainted than with most other members of the Government :—

LETTER FROM LORD SALISBURY.

December 4th, 1883.

DEAR MR. MACLEAN,

I have not before had the opportunity of writing to you to congratulate you, as I do most heartily, upon the result of your hard work at Oldham. It was a very satisfactory achievement in many points

of view, and I have no doubt did much to influence the action of the constituencies in the neighbourhood. I believe that except in the case of Mr. Cobbert, who had strong local and traditional influence, no conservative before has been able to carry this seat. I sincerely hope that at the next election you may not only retain it but be able to bring back a colleague with you.

Yours very truly,

SALISBURY.

Lord Salisbury's expectation was fulfilled. The local association found me a bright and capable young colleague in Sir Elliott Lees, and we were both triumphantly returned at the head of the poll in 1886.

LETTER FROM LORD GEORGE HAMILTON.

November 30th, 1888.

DEAR MR. MACLEAN,

Hearing that you have come back to Chiswick, I must write one line to congratulate you upon your great victory. Your knowledge and speaking power will be of the greatest use to the party in the House of Commons, and I hope may be the means of bringing political reputation and renown to yourself.

Believe me, very truly,

GEORGE HAMILTON.

I found, too, that a very good feeling prevailed among the Lancashire members of the House, who were now a large body and who were willing to work together on many questions of public importance. But what chiefly struck me was the spirit of Freemasonry, so to speak, that animated all the members of the House. Every new man, no matter who he might be, felt that he was cordially welcomed, and was placed at once on a footing of perfect equality. The House is often spoken of as the best club in London, but that is a wrong description of it. It is not a nice place to dine at, and, although the libraries are delightful rooms, I always found it impossible, owing to the constant stream of men coming and going, to write or read there for more than a short time. On the other hand, to study the humours of the House itself and the characters of the various men who took part in the debates was a never-ending source of amusement and instruction, and I failed to understand why so many members wandered about the lobbies and the reception-rooms and only came into the House itself for a division. The House of Commons

has always maintained the character of being much more business-like and interesting than other assemblies because real debating goes on there. Members cannot sit at their desks and write letters or read the newspapers ; they must pay some attention to what is going on. Invariably the best thought of the nation is expressed here. Every man gets a hearing on his own merits, and it rarely happens that some fresh thought or happy expression does not give a new turn to the debate. The House, as I knew it, was singularly patient and at the same time wonderfully sensitive. It could sit still to listen to a bore by the hour together, and then be roused into a fit of fury by an orator who knew how to apply the lash skilfully. Some animosity existed against the party led by Mr. Parnell because they had systematically attempted to worry the House, but otherwise the utmost good-fellowship reigned.

I now made friends with Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, who at that time figured largely in the Parliamentary Debates. One has almost forgotten now the curious little squabbles that arose on the question whether he should be

allowed to take his seat in the House. His defence of himself on that occasion greatly raised his reputation in the House, and made a powerful impression on Mr. Gladstone. Some of his rhetorical points were very good. He offered to resign and undergo a fresh election if the House would then accept him on his return. Some unmannerly Tories laughed. Mr. Bradlaugh turned upon them, and, drawing himself up, exclaimed "Ah! you doubt me. Bradlaugh is prouder than you." He was remarkably amiable and fair-minded, and on some of the social questions which he thoroughly understood he was so manifestly in the right that he obtained the support of many independent Conservatives below the gangway." This delighted him, and he used to say to me, "I know I can always count on your front bench below the gangway men." He always dined at the House, but did not trouble himself to attend every division and would always oblige a Conservative friend by pairing with him. I have often thought myself that the passion for multiplying divisions is by no means a good test of Parliamentary attendance. I used to tell my

constituents that members who did not go home to dinner either had not homes of their own, or did not care to go to them.

One evening Mr. Bradlaugh and I were playing chess together, and the game had reached an interesting stage. The division bell rang, and he said to me, "Do you want to be present at the division?" I replied, "No," and he said, "Well, no more do I, so let us stop here and finish the game." He was curiously simple-minded in his vanity, which was of a colossal character. I remarked to him one evening that I was sorry I had missed a speech of his. He said, "Ah! you should read it; it will give you an idea of the variety of my powers." He became a great favourite in the House. One of the things on which he used to plume himself was his knowledge of the law. The present Lord Chief Justice, then Sir Richard Webster, one of the most good natured and astute of men, used to play upon this foible. He would cross the floor of the House, call to Bradlaugh, take him by the arm, and go out of the House with him as if he were a bosom friend with whom he

wished to discuss a knotty point of law. The late Lord Chief Justice, Sir Charles Russell, was a man of quite a different type. Quick, alert, and eager for controversy, his impulsive temper frequently plunged him into hot water, from which, however, his natural goodness of disposition always rescued him. In playing at chess, which he was fond of, if you beat him he would look at you as if he wished to throw the pieces at your head; but he was most open and cordial in his conversation, and I never knew any one so ready with words of praise or encouragement for a new member who he thought had done well.

One of the greatest taxes, I used to think, on the time of a member of Parliament, was the way in which his constituents, in these days of rapid locomotion, came down to the House and called him out to show them and their families over the whole Palace of Westminster. An interesting debate might be going on which one wished to listen to, or one might be waiting anxiously to be called on for a speech; but there was no help for it, the gentleman in the lobby must be attended to. It became necessary

to go over the House of Lords and the library where the warrant for the execution of Charles I. was on show, the corridors with the pictures, the crypt, the old room where Cromwell is supposed to have signed the death warrant, the libraries and lobbies of the House of Commons, and, finally, after about half an hour's walk, to entertain the ladies to tea on the terrace. This final ceremony was indispensable. Ladies have a charming way of abusing any privilege which is extended to them, and every lady of one's acquaintance, old or young, would regard it as a mortal offence if she came down to Westminster and was not invited to take tea on the Terrace. This addition to London's fashionable amusements has been sadly overdone, and many members must often wish there were a law prohibiting the appearance of ladies on the Terrace while a debate is going on. On the other hand, young members seem to like the institution, and some are so fond of it that they encourage their friends to issue regular invitations to tea parties on the Terrace. The only hope of a change is that smart society may some day suddenly find this form of

entertainment is a bore, and so give it up.

The Parliament of 1885 had not been long in existence when Mr. Gladstone plunged the whole country into confusion by declaring in favour of Home Rule for Ireland; but it is wonderful, on looking back, to think how short a time this controversy lasted. The debates and election of 1886 were all over in six months, and most of the time in the House of Commons was taken up with Liberal Unionist speeches, as every man who had left Mr. Gladstone thought it necessary to explain why he had done so. The Tories, therefore, had nothing to do but to look on, and after Home Rule had been disposed of in 1886 their chief occupation consisted in coming down to the House for an all-night sitting, if necessary, and voting steadily for the reforms of procedure which were required to put down obstruction. I remember on one occasion not getting away from the House till about seven in the morning, and being back in my place again by three in the afternoon. A member in these days of early hours would indignantly resent being kept out of his bed after one o'clock.

I turned my attention to Indian affairs, and

was lucky enough to make a hit with the first speech I delivered in the House, on the conquest and annexation of Burmah. A member of the Liberal front bench assured me I was the only man who had ever succeeded in making an Indian question interesting, and my old friend Mr. Joseph Cowen—the kindly spirit and man of political genius who represented Newcastle-on-Tyne, and who had taken the chair at a farewell dinner given me when I left that town in 1858—came to me and said: "Now you have got the ear of the House; mind you keep it. Debates," he added, "are not what they used to be in the House; the Irish have killed debating. But it is still a pleasure to know that what you say here will be listened to by the whole world." Mr. Chamberlain was speaking at the time, and Mr. Cowen went on to say: "Mark that man. He is the shallowest and most self-complacent politician in the House of Commons. If ever he comes into power, he will do some mortal harm to the State." It cannot be fairly said any longer that Mr. Chamberlain is shallow; education has broadened him slowly down to the level of his

colleagues on the Treasury bench, but that he is still intemperate and reckless is shown by his whole career.

Some time afterwards I had another opportunity of using my Indian experience. A motion was brought forward in the House for reinstating in the Indian Civil Service Mr. William Tayler, of Patna, who had been dismissed for failure, as the Government thought, to do his duty during the Mutiny. I held the opinion that Mr. Tayler had been justly punished, and I had prepared a speech on the subject. During the debate one of Mr. Gladstone's colleagues came across the House to me and begged me to intervene, saying that Mr. Gladstone had come down after dinner with a strong impression that Mr. Tayler had been badly treated, and intended to speak and vote against the Government. Soon afterwards I was called upon by the Speaker. When the division was taken Mr. Gladstone walked into the Government lobby, and his colleague told me that the great man had said he was quite satisfied with the case I had made out. As I passed out of the house the Speaker (Mr. Peel)

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called me up and shook hands with me, and said he had never listened to a more interesting debate. It was on this occasion that Mr. H. W. Lucy, the Toby M.P. of *Punch*, who has so much power to make or mar Parliamentary reputations, was good enough to pay me the following pretty compliment :—"Mr. Gladstone was absorbed for a long time attentive to the speech in which Mr. Maclean disclosed to an unsuspecting House the addition of a first-class Parliamentary debater."

An absurd incident arose out of this speech of mine. Sir Henry Havelock Allan, who had always been on good terms with me, was so much annoyed at the part I had taken in opposing a motion he had seconded that he passed me by for a whole year without recognising me. Then it happened that he wanted me to do something, and he came and sat beside me and began to speak as if nothing had happened. I said to him that that was all very well, but was he aware that he had cut me for a year? He replied, with a loud laugh, "All right; anything you like. Pistols for two and coffee for one to-morrow morning, if you

like." Nobody took Sir Henry seriously. He was fond of placing himself below the gangway, where I usually sat, and making in a loud voice offensive remarks about the hot-tempered Irishmen opposite. One day he said to me, "You see that fellow opposite. Many's the shilling he has had from me for holding my horse when I commanded the troops at Cork. Now, just you watch how I will drive him out of the House." He went and seated himself on the front bench opposite, and one by one the Irishmen disappeared and left him alone there. Then he winked solemnly to me and stalked slowly out of the House.

I have referred once or twice to the Speaker, and I may say that it is a fortunate thing in these days, when liberty of speech in Parliament is so much curtailed and so much more authority is placed in the hands of the official who directs its debates, that the House of Commons has found such excellent Speakers. The present Lord Peel had a great reputation, and he looked the part of Speaker to perfection. But sometimes I was tempted to think that he overacted the part. He was a very stern and austere guardian

of the rights and privileges of the House, and occasionally took somewhat too seriously matters which he might well have passed over with a smile. Thus I remember that once a young and ambitious barrister was very anxious to speak in a great debate on Home Rule, and rose in his place several times without catching the Speaker's eye. A practical joker who was a great friend of his wrote him a note in pencil, saying, "I am sorry I have not been able to call you before, but if you get up after the next speaker I will do so." This he signed "A. W. P.," which might be taken for the Speaker's initials. The victim of this joke rose again several times, but was always overlooked. At last he went to the Speaker and expressed surprise that he had not been called, especially after the note he had received. The Speaker demanded to see the note, and then fell into a state of righteous indignation, declaring that he would bring the writer of the note before the House and have him properly punished. It required all the patient dexterity of Mr. Akers Douglas to soothe him, and he never forgot the liberty that had been taken with his name.

But I now approach more serious matters which vitally affected the interests of my constituents at Oldham and did me a lasting injury.

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CHAPTER IV.

Disagreement with the Trade Unionists of Oldham—Causes of my Defeat in 1892—Bimetallism in the Country and in Parliament.

IV.

Trade unionism is, as everybody knows, a tremendous power in Lancashire, and from the beginning of my connection with Oldham I had been inclined to resent the dictatorial and arrogant airs which the trade-union leaders gave themselves. I got on very well with them, however, for a long time, although they did not like the open way in which I scoffed at Fair Trade. They were good enough to make me the spokesman of Lancashire in opposing the abolition of the half-time movement, and we won a considerable victory in the House of Commons, which was all the more remarkable because the leader of the House, Mr. W. H. Smith, told me privately he was in favour of the abolition. But I committed the inexpiable sin of speaking against a bill brought in by Sir Henry James for compelling masters to give workmen "particulars" of the special work on which they were engaged. The trade-union leaders had really drafted this bill, and they were exceedingly angry with me

for not backing up their case. One of them said to me, frankly enough, "We don't want to quarrel with you, but we know how to manage the mills better than the masters do, and we mean to do it." In their organ, the *Cotton Factory Times*, they denounced me for what they called my bitterness of speech, and said of me, "Mr. Maclean is a many-sided man, and it is difficult to take him all in at once."

My little sneers in the House of Commons were, however, of a very mild character. After the election of 1892 I met in Regent Street a distinguished member of the Opposition, who asked me how it was I had lost my seat, which he had thought was quite safe. I said I believed it was because I had ventured to say in the House that even property still had some rights in this country. The Radical chief looked upwards thoughtfully, and remarked, "Ah! that's a thing you may think, but you mustn't say it in these days." I am not sure, on looking back, that it was worth my while to take the side of the masters, who are intensely selfish, never work cordially together, and show very little public spirit in taking up new ideas.

Two illustrations I may give from my recent Cardiff experience of the way in which employers make a mess of things. The coalowners of South Wales all rose in arms against the Workmen's Compensation Bill, and Lord Bute's agent, Sir W. T. Lewis, was constantly in the Lobby with piles of statistics, in which the most elaborate miscalculations were made by gentlemen calling themselves experts as to what would be the results of the new tax the bill proposed to put upon the coal trade. The result showed that employers could be insured against loss on remarkably easy terms, and the experience of only a year or two was so convincing on this point that a bill extending the principle of compensation to nearly all trades was passed last year with general assent. Another example in point is the outcry raised by the railway directors against the introduction of automatic couplings for railway waggons. So warmly was this agitation taken up that Lord Claud Hamilton, the chairman of the Great Eastern Railway, broke off his connection with the Conservative party because Mr. Ritchie, the President of the Board of Trade, had introduced

such a bill. Mr. Ritchie, however, being a strong man, stood firm, and appointed a Committee to investigate the whole question. The report of this Committee was so conclusive that the bill on being introduced again was passed without any difficulty. These examples show how careful the Legislature ought to be in dealing with questions which affect the working classes.

My indiscretion in quarrelling with the trade-union leaders might perhaps have been pardoned if I had not given them a fresh and graver cause of offence. They had taken up warmly the heresy of bimetallism, and had persuaded the working men to believe that if they were allowed to exchange gold for silver in India at a fixed ratio they would get much better prices for their goods. I was an ardent advocate of the single standard, and had taken a leading part in the House of Commons in opposing Mr. Chaplin's motion in favour of bimetallism. At that time opinion was much divided on the question, and Mr. Goschen, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with that curious strain of weakness in his character which kept him from ever being

a great man, professed to be able to see the intellectual side of bimetallism, and shirked saying anything definite on the subject. I myself pressed him to speak, but he told me he did not want to declare himself and would rather leave the matter in my hands. The debate was talked out, much to the chagrin of the bimetallists, who believed they had a majority in the House, and the agitation was kept up more warmly than ever in the constituencies.

When the election of 1892 drew near I was surprised to find how many converts had been made in Oldham to the principle of bimetallism. The Bimetallic League, having plenty of money at its command, had worked with all its might to defeat the men who were known to be partisans of the single standard, and a day or two before the election Mr. Hilton Greaves, who knew everything that was going on, told me I should be beaten if I did not give way on this point. "There are," he said, "enough of these bimetallists to turn the election. You need not speak about it; you have only to give me a nod, and that will satisfy them." I said I

would take a night to think over it, but the next day, after reflection, I told Mr. Greaves I could not give way. He put both hands on my shoulders and said, "Well, I am chairman of the party, and I am bound to do all I can to win, but if I were you I would do as you do." The end was that I was defeated, and a breach was made in my Parliamentary career which has never been healed over.

Still, I had my revenge upon the bimetallists. After my election for Cardiff in 1895 these gentlemen again showed much activity in the House of Commons, and gave notice of a resolution which would have committed the House to the adoption of the double standard. The monometallists in the House held a meeting, which was attended by more than a hundred members, in one of the committee-rooms to consider what ought to be done. Sir John Lubbock was in the chair, and he suggested, in his suave way, that no harm would be done if we allow the bimetallic resolution to be passed without opposition. I sprang to my feet and hotly protested against such a surrender. Other members followed on the same side, and finally,

on the motion of Sir H. Seymour King, the matter was taken out of Sir John Lubbock's hands and entrusted to me, with instructions to frame a fighting amendment. This I did, and placed it on the paper.

A day or two afterwards Sir William Harcourt came to me in the tea-room and spoke about the tactics that ought to be employed. He himself deprecated a division, which, he said, might cause great alarm and confusion in the country, and he asked me if I could not see Sir M. Hicks-Beach, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and get an assurance from him which would show that the Government did not intend to palter with bimetallism in a double sense, but were firmly resolved to stand by a single gold currency. I said to Sir William that he himself had better see Sir Michael, as he could speak with the authority of the leader of a great party and had more personal influence with the Chancellor of the Exchequer than anybody else, and he promised to act on my suggestion. The next evening Sir Michael sent me word that he would like to see me in his private room. I went,

taking Mr. Brodie Hoare and other members with me, and Sir Michael assured us that the speech he meant to make would be quite satisfactory to us. I promised, if that were so, that I would withdraw my amendment. Sir Michael was even better than his word, for he made such an uncompromising and slashing speech in defence of the existing currency system of this country that Mr. Arthur Balfour and Mr. Chaplin, who sat near him, were fairly beside themselves with rage and could not refrain from angry interruptions. The debate lasted all night, but the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer had simply killed bimetallism, and nothing more has been heard of the pestilent heresy from that day to this. During the evening I met a prominent member of the Opposition, who said to me, "Well this debate is going very nicely. Beach made an admirable speech, but I never heard a man lay the lash on to his own colleagues with such hearty goodwill in my life." This was the most considerable legislative achievement in which I took a principal share in the House of Commons; and I shall always feel proud of having organised

the debate which ended in the smashing of bimetallism.

Another commercial matter in which I took part with considerable success was the question of the renewal of the P. and O. Company's contract in 1886. The debate on the first evening was marked by the development of such strong opposition to the contract that the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. W. L. Jackson, took alarm, and postponed the discussion. He came to me afterwards and begged me to speak. I did so, taking the line that the P. and O. Company had frequently rendered great services to the State, and that it was the interest of England to maintain an Imperial line to India. My speech proved the turning point of the debate. The opposition collapsed, and the Company got its contract.

CHAPTER V.

Return to Parliament in 1895 as M.P. for Cardiff—The Political Situations There—The House of Commons of 1900.

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V.

So much has been said in the papers for the last twelve months regarding my relations with the electors of Cardiff that I do not propose to dwell at any length on this episode in my career. The constituency was very well affected towards me, and very proud of having returned a Conservative member to the House of Commons, after forty years of unavailing effort to prevail against Radicalism. But Cardiff consists, properly speaking, of two different towns, There are the inhabitants of the municipal borough, who live there all the year round, and there are the floating mercantile population of the docks, who come there every day to transact business, but whose dwelling-houses are at a distance from the town, and who affect to belong to the county people and look down upon the rest of their fellow-citizens. A number of these gentlemen from the docks are tenants of houses on the Penarth estate of Lord Windsor, who was a chief agent of Mr. Cecil Rhodes for establishing and

maintaining the South African Association in England, and who took a very active part in promoting an agitation against me on account of my opposition to Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons.

This agitation was carefully nursed by the central Liberal Unionist Association in London, which exists for no other purpose than to boycott and drive out of Parliament every-one who will not bow the knee to the Colonial Secretary. But the coalowners and ship-owners of Cardiff had, at the same time, very substantial reasons for resenting the conduct of a member who would not do the bidding of the Government. Cardiff is one of the towns, like Birmingham, Sheffield, Barrow-in-Furness, and the dockyard towns, which have been completely debauched by a war that has brought them fabulous wealth. While the general commerce of the country has suffered, the towns which can furnish the Government with abundant supplies of munitions of war have prospered amazingly, and a Cardiff coal merchant very honestly told me he must support the Government on the principle that one good turn

deserves another. Self-interest therefore played a great part in the determination of the electors of Cardiff to find a member to represent them who could always be depended upon to vote straight with the most beneficent Government of modern times.

It would be unreasonable for me to make a complaint on this score, but I do feel most bitterly the treacherous action of the leaders of the Unionist party in London, who violated all the honourable traditions of party organisation by putting forward a Conservative candidate to oppose me while I was still the member for Cardiff. The chief of the Conservative Central Office in London, Mr. R. W. E. Middleton, came to me and professed the greatest anxiety to close up the breach between myself and my constituents, and after some conversation he promised to write to Cardiff and suggest that a great public meeting should be held, under the presidency of some independent gentleman, at which I should have the opportunity of vindicating my public conduct. But while this negotiation was going on, what was my amazement to find that not only Mr. Middleton

himself, but Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Balfour had accepted invitations to a dinner given at the Hotel Cecil by a gentleman who had offered, without consulting me, to stand for Cardiff in the Conservative interest, and who had arranged this dinner to give himself a good start on his political undertaking, I dare say Mr. Balfour was as innocent as a child in this matter, though Mr. Chamberlain was of course a principal party to the intrigue, but it seems a pity that Mr. Balfour's guilelessness should lead him thus astray. This, however, is the way in which the present Government now manages its business. As it happens, I was too ill to present myself to the constituency at the general election ; but I am happy to say that the intrigue against me failed, and that the seat was captured by an honest Radical, and not by Mr. Chamberlain's nominee.

When I was returned for Cardiff, the first thing that struck me was the change that had taken place in the character of the House of Commons. A shrewd observer once remarked to me that a member who had lost his seat and been out of Parliament for a time never found himself at

home when he came back again. This is only natural. New members resent the intrusion among them of one who can boast of his Parliamentary experiences, and the contemporaries of the returned member have formed new interests and associations and learnt to regard politics from a different point of view. But in other respects the atmosphere of the House seemed to have changed. I asked a fellow-member of a humorous turn of mind where the Liberal Unionists sat now, and he replied, "Confound them, I believe they're all on the Treasury bench." This was hardly an exaggeration, Mr. Chamberlain had packed the Treasury bench with all his immediate followers for whom he could reasonably demand admittance into the Government, and the rest of the Liberal Unionists soon had their exceeding great reward. It is fair to admit that the men belonging to this party had stood aside for some years while the Conservatives were in office, but in 1895 their eagerness to share in the spoils of office could no longer be restrained, and it may be said without exaggeration that since that time every man who called himself a Liberal Unionist

has been promoted or decorated or rewarded in some way or other.

Modern Governments have discovered in the wholesale distribution of titular distinctions a method of political corruption which Walpole never dreamt of. Lord Salisbury has created so many knights and baronets as to justify the saying that you cannot throw a stone at a dog without hitting a knight in London. Real power the Prime Minister reserves for himself and his friends, but he considers that people who press inconvenient claims can be bought off cheaply by the gift of a title. So keen, too, now is the craving for these distinctions that the same stamp of men who thirty or forty years ago would have despised them are now seen wallowing in the slough of servility for the sake of writing "Sir" before their names, or, as Falstaff says, making any Joan "my lady." There can be no doubt that members' wives have a great deal to do with this change of manners. Rivalry in social ostentation is more especially a ladies' foible, and I know of one well-authenticated case in which one of the members for a double-barrelled constituency threatened

to resign unless he were knighted, as his wife would not consent to go in to dinner after the wife of his colleague, who had received this honour. One Liberal Unionist member who is afflicted with deafness is said to have got his baronetcy by watching Mr. Chamberlain's lips and cheering loudly whenever he saw that his leader had finished a sentence. Anyhow, the Colonial Secretary has surrounded himself with a grateful band of sycophants, who are always ready to applaud everything he says or does.

There has, again, been a great increase of late years in the number of young members who represent what I am afraid must be called the luxurious and corrupt society of the West End of London. These young gentlemen are all built on the same model. It cannot be said that they have studied politics very deeply, but they have all had the same public-school training, they salute one another by their Christian names, and they are excellent companions, good sportsmen, and dashing leaders of men; but they have no brains, a qualification which English public schools, unfortunately, omit from their curriculum. These

young men take up public affairs in the same arrogant and vainglorious spirit which marked our diplomatic negotiations with the Transvaal and the early stages of the present war, and the consequence has been a notable increase in the intolerant spirit of the majority which keeps the present Government in power. Anything approaching insubordination or even free criticism is bitterly resented. and the man who is guilty of such a crime is marked out for exemplary punishment and finds it difficult even to get a fair hearing. In this respect the House displays a marked deterioration. Its character is also injured by the predominance of the power of one man. The present Parliament, which is not much changed from that of 1895, is Mr. Chamberlain's Parliament. The chief debates turns on Mr. Chamberlain's merits or demerits, and it is unfortunate that this Minister has involved himself in an atmosphere of intrigue from which he cannot shake himself free. The questions which constantly arise bearing upon his personal honour impart an element of vulgarity to all the deliberations of that august assembly and lower the reputation of the House out of

doors. Most observers must have noticed the failure of the present Parliament to produce men who rise above the rank and file or give promise of attaining to eminence. The truth is, the system of debating as now carried on affords few opportunities of acquiring distinction. It is for this reason, no doubt, that Lord Salisbury, instead of selecting as his colleagues a few superior men, surrounds himself with a crowd of men of commonplace character and mediocre abilities. If he cannot have quality in the Cabinet, he is resolved at all events to have quantity.

The failure of Parliament to do anything worthy of notice has been shown most conspicuously in the way it has dealt with the great question of army reform. The war is now well advanced into its third year, but no steps whatever have been taken to strengthen the army or make it less of a fortuitous combination of heterogeneous forces than it was before. All available men have been pressed into the service of South Africa. The yeomanry, the militia, and the volunteers have been in turn appealed to, and the name of Queen Victoria was made

use of in an appeal to men, who had gone to the war relying on the assurance that they should soon return to their business, to show their loyalty by staying till the end of the war. This is not the way to make active service popular with the voluntary forces. Having dragged together all the men they could lay hands upon in England and even weakened their power to keep the Indian garrison up to the proper standard, the Government then had recourse to the clever device of borrowing soldiers from the colonies at an absurdly high price. They have compassed sea and land to obtain a few recruits, and now they boast that they have brought the colonies closer to the British Empire. Nobody doubts that the fighting instinct is strong among the adventurous spirits who abound in the colonies, or that our kinsmen beyond the seas are proud of the chance of proving that their manhood is equal to that of Englishmen. But the colonies have nothing to do with our quarrel in South Africa, and should not already to have had enough of the sorry have been dragged into it. If the war lingers on much longer it may safely be predicted

that we shall be left alone to fight our own battles. This we ought to have done long ago, but the Government finds it an easier thing to collect soldiers from every source than to go to the House of Commons to ask for them. If, however, we are committed to an Imperial policy which binds us down to a succession of wars of conquest, we ought to be ready to rise to the height of our responsibilities and to co-ordinate our whole strength in a national and democratic army, instead of clinging to an army which is nothing but the spoilt darling of smart society in London.

CHAPTER VI.

The South African War.

VI.

The last two years of my Parliamentary service were taken up entirely with the discussion of the South African War, which became the absorbing subject of political controversy. "I cannot understand how any person who approaches this matter with an unprejudiced mind can fail to see that this struggle had to come. The real issue behind all the negotiations was the determination of the Boers to secure the supremacy in South Africa, and all their preparations were made for it." In these words Mr. Chamberlain confidently offers his final vindication of the policy that led to the war, and herein we have his explanation of the assertion he has frequently made that the war was unavoidable. It may be useful to compare the Colonial Minister's version of the negotiations that preceded the war with the downright statement of Steyn and De Wet in their latest proclamation—"Be it known to all that the war was forced upon the Republics by the British Government." On which side does the truth

lie? Was the war a just and righteous one, provoked by Boer arrogance, or were the two Dutch Republics the victims of an intrigue? Were they really jockeyed into declaring war, as Napoleon III. was jockeyed by Bismarck?

Mr. Chamberlain has persistently maintained that he hoped for peace to the last moment, and that the despatch of the British Government decided upon in the first week of September, 1899, granted to the Boers nine-tenths of their demands, though unfortunately Mr. Kruger sailed to interpret it in that sense. But anyone who turns to a file of the *Times*, which enjoyed the full confidence of the Imperial Government, and reads the first leading article in that paper for September 9th, 1899, will see that it was nothing but a pæan of exultation over the ultimatum which had been at last sent to South Africa. The Government had made the war, and it also made its own plan of campaign, treating with contempt the warnings and advice of the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Wolseley. The *Times* rejoices that the Boers had been addressed in a way which would give them no further excuse for equivocation, and it

points to the resolve of the Government to strengthen the garrison of South Africa as a proof that serious business was meant. It is true that this increase of our forces, mainly by drafts from India, was not a very large one, but nobody dreamt at that time that the Boers could offer any serious resistance to the power of the British Empire. "In the meantime," said the *Times*, "the British forces in South Africa are to be increased by 10,000 men, and immediate measures will be taken to carry out this order. When the reinforcements now under orders have reached South Africa they will raise the number of our troops there to about 23,000 men, a force which ought to be at least sufficient to secure our colonial frontiers against any incursions." These declarations prove conclusively that Her Majesty's Government did not when the war began suspect the Boers of having prepared plans for turning us out of South Africa; otherwise their despatch of only 23,000 men to foil such a design would have been an act of fatuous and criminal folly.

Nor have subsequent events shown that the Boers ever possessed in men or arms the means

to carry out so prodigious a design. It is the fashion now to exaggerate their strength so as to prevent the confession of our own incredible blundering. But people who tell the truth—like Mr. Bennet Burleigh, for instance, the distinguished correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*—have told us with what an astonishingly small force the Boer horsemen overran Natal and spread terror to the gates of Durban, and it is obvious from the statistics of killed and captured Boers which have been published that with our great army of 250,000 men, drawn from an Imperial population of 60,000,000, we have never had more than 60,000 men to fight against. We hold nearly 40,000 prisoners, Botha and De Wet have forces still under arms which cannot be reckoned at as many as 10,000, and probably some 10,000 Boers have been killed during the war. These figures would seem to account for the whole able-bodied population of the Republics, and it is childish to say that such a small nation, governed by men of whom many had visited Europe and seen the strength and riches of England, conceived the desperate design of overthrowing British power in South

Africa or had any other motive than to guard their cherished independence.

In any case Mr. Chamberlain is the last man who should accuse them of going to war to fulfil a long premeditated design. He says in his latest *apologia* that the retrocession of the Transvaal in 1880 was "a magnanimous act of policy" which he and his friends thought would have been accepted in the spirit in which it was made, and he goes on to suggest that it was abused by the Boers. This is the line of defence taken up also by the Duke of Devonshire, who shares with Mr. Chamberlain the responsibility for the war, but it is historically inaccurate. Both the Duke and Mr. Chamberlain are blessed with conveniently short memories or they would not have forgotten that the magnanimous surrender of 1880 was succeeded by the more business-like treaty of 1884, in which, after several years' experience of the way in which the Boers had used their independence. The Liberal Government to which the leaders of the Liberal Unionists belonged, raised the Transvaal to the dignity of a Republic, gave it the right to send envoys

to foreign Courts, and struck out the term suzerainty, to which the Boers had a rooted objection. In fact, it may be said that for fourteen of the best years of his life, from 1880 to 1894, and not, as he would now have us believe, on one solitary occasion only, Mr. Chamberlain was a warm partisan of Boer independence, and would have scouted the idea that the Boers entertained any scheme likely to endanger the supremacy of the British Empire. It cannot be supposed that he would have helped to build up a State holding such ideas. The real preparations of the Boers for war date only from 1895, and they can be fairly ascribed to the alarm caused at Pretoria by the insurrection at Johannesburg, the Jameson Raid, and the incessant intrigues of Mr. Cecil Rhodes, who had the sympathy and active support of our Colonial Office.

The controversy as to the origin of and responsibility for the war will rage probably to the end of this century; it will serve a more practical purpose to consider what is to be done when the war comes to an end. The settlement seems to be left entirely in the hands of Mr.

Chamberlain. It was he who plunged the country into the scrape, and the Opposition are apparently content to leave it to him to drag us out again. His courage is equal to the task, and he seems to be the only man in Parliament who has a definite plan for the reconstruction of a federated South Africa under the British flag. This has been Mr. Chamberlain's strength throughout the whole unhappy business. He alone has been, like Lord Palmerston in the Crimean Cabinet, the man who knew his own mind, and so he has done what he would. Mr. Chamberlain is not—Addison said that no man of commanding ability could be—a general favourite. His rash judgment and imperious manner are constant causes of offence, and he has a host of personal enemies even in the Parliament which has undergone what is known as "Chamberlain's purge." Although he has thrust himself upon the aristocracy, he does not belong to them. In tastes and habit of mind he is essentially a middle-class man. He seems to be devoid of the sporting instinct, and to have none of the amiable weaknesses which stand out as points of relief in the characters of men of the world.

But "praise deserved no enemy can grudge," and it is only fair to acknowledge that Mr. Chamberlain is a consummate man of business. One of his colleagues said to me long ago, when I made some remarks in disparagement of the Colonial Secretary—"Yes, that is all very well, and to a certain extent I agree with you, but if you want anything done by this Government Chamberlain is the man to do it." His skill as a debater has given him a commanding place in an assembly in which power and readiness of speech are rated at least at their full value. His training and experience have made him extremely quick of apprehension. He must realise now that all the highest qualities of statesmanship which any man can possess are needed to bring the struggle between Boer and Briton to a happy issue. He does not get much help from his colleagues in the Government. He must gnash his teeth with rage at such a declaration as was made on the opening day of the session by Lord Salisbury, who has cultivated the art of blurting out with cynical frankness, on the most unsuitable occasions, sentiments which embody the most

belated prejudices and the most secret desires of the least enlightened of his followers. In his speech on the Address the Prime Minister said that local self-government might not be given to the Boers for years, or "perhaps for generations." Now this was a supremely silly thing for any Prime Minister to say. It is quite certain that the conscience of the English people would revolt against any attempt to hold the Dutch population of South Africa in subjection "for generations." There is a general disposition to give the Government the men and the money required to bring the war to a speedy termination, but it is hoped that after this has been accomplished the Boers will soon be placed on a footing of equality with ourselves as regards civil rights.

Mr. Chamberlain had a good impulse in this direction when he made the speech last November which gave such widespread pleasure, but he has since gone back from this high level and followed too submissively the advice of Lord Milner. The object of this administrator is to inflict some public and never-to-be-forgotten humiliation on the handful of Boers

who are still in arms. It is urged by him that unconditional surrender is the only offer that ought to be made to the starving and ragged peasants who have nothing to keep them together but their own unconquerable love of independence. But what is to be gained by forcing these patriots, whose condition should excite our pity and respect, to pass under the Caudine Forks before they are allowed to become British subjects? Mr. Chamberlain should beware of being influenced by opinion at Capetown, where the British population seem to have nursed themselves into a mood in which nothing will satisfy them but the extermination of the Boers. Projects for the establishment of a British ascendancy are freely put forward. The country is to be flooded with swarms of immigrants and dragooned, possibly "for generations," by Baden-Powell's Police, drilled after the model and on the scale of the Irish Constabulary. The feeling at Capetown, in fact, resembles the feeling that has prevailed in Ulster against the rest of Ireland, and His Majesty's Governtment is urged to establish for ever the domination of the men who have

conquered South Africa. It is not on these principles that a lasting peace can be restored to the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Our first business must be to repatriate the able-bodied prisoners and the women and children in the land we have laid waste, and to provide them with the means of gaining a livelihood. We profess to be anxious that there should be friendship hereafter between Dutch and English, and the first step to be taken towards the attainment of this desirable consummation is to convince the Dutch that they are not looked down upon. We have done enough to show our military superiority. Now the time has come when we can display our magnanimity without the fear that it will be misconstrued. Mr. Chamberlain will make a fatal mistake if he inagines that by placing the Dutch under military rule and then under the rule of the Colonial Office for a term of years he will prepare the way for free institutions. Such a settlement would be only another form of servitude and could never lead to a lasting settlement.

CHAPTER VII.

Our Policy in China—The Great Siberian Railway—An Overland Railway from Calais to Calcutta.

VII.

During the whole of the nineteenth century England enjoyed a practical monopoly of the trade with China, and was recognised throughout the Far East as the one Great Power which represented European civilisation. To such an extent was Chinese belief in English supremacy carried that when the Americans first appeared upon the stage to compete with us in commercial enterprise they became known among the Chinese as "No. 2 Englishmen." With the dawn of the twentieth century this proud pre-eminence has completely disappeared. England is now only one of a multitude of rival Powers jostling one another by dark intrigue for the spoils of the dismemberment of China, and our influence has decayed, chiefly through our own fault, till we are less considered than any other of the leading European Powers.

How has this deplorable change been brought about? To understand it we must look back and see how our superiority was in the first instance built up. We find that it was due

originally to the daring spirit of our sailors, and then to the happy accident of our geographical situation. The British navy first of all expelled from the Eastern seas all our rivals—Dutch, Portuguese, and French,—and enabled us to complete at our leisure the conquest of India, and to secure all the strong places on the trade routes between Europe and the East. Then, the Continent of Europe was so exhausted at the close of the Napoleonic wars that for the rest of the century competition with England at sea was hardly dreamt of. Finally, our insular situation fitted us for maritime expeditions and made them indispensable to our existence as a nation, and the want of seafaring genius among the nations of the Continent made them too timid to venture into the *mare clausum* which England had constituted beyond the Cape of Good Hope.

The cutting of the Suez Canal struck the first blow at England's predominance in the East. That great work may have been of benefit to civilisation, but it did a lasting injury to English interests, and Lord Palmerston showed his usual political insight when he determined

that, as an English Minister whose business it was first of all to defend the interests of his own country, he was bound to oppose the great scheme of M. de Lesseps. The opening of the short cut to the East from Port Said to Suez and the abolition of the long sea voyage round the Cape of Good Hope have brought the warships of all the European Powers into Eastern waters, and with the exception—a large one, no doubt—of India there is not now any Oriental country in which our authority remains unchallenged. France has possessed herself of Madagascar and a great part of Siam, and has established the new empire of Tonquin on the southern border of China. Russia has annexed the whole of Central Asia up to the frontiers of Afghanistan, and is now pushing down feelers to the Persian Gulf, in order to extend her commerce in that direction. Germany, whose masterful and energetic spirit, now that her people feel they have become citizens of a mighty Empire, asserts its pretensions at every point of the globe, has acquired an immense extent of territory in East Africa, and, what is still more serious, has used her

influence at Constantinople to obtain a concession for the construction of a railway through Mesopotamia to Bagdad and Bussorah, at the head of the Persian Gulf, and so to get possession of the valley watered by the great river Euphrates, which only wants decent government to become once more what it was for many ages in the old days, one of the chief granaries of the world.

In a conversation I had a few years ago with one of the most far-sighted and distinguished members of the Conservative party I urged that the old policy of backing up Turkey was obsolete, that Constantinople itself was situated on a backwater, away from the main highways of trade, and that we ought to be content if, in the general break-up of the Turkish Empire, we secured the Nile and the delta of the Euphrates down to the Persian Gulf. The statesman to whom I was talking said that he, for his part, considered any English Ministry ought to be impeached which allowed another Great Power to lay hands upon Mesopotamia. Yet Germany is now doing this before our eyes, and the Imperialist Govern-

ment of England looks on with "a sombre acquiescence." What has been done in Persian and Arabian waters has latterly been attempted in China, and that immense Empire is in danger of being torn in pieces by Powers which are now keen to plunder where England once held sway.

Lord Salisbury must bear the responsibility for the abdication of England's position in the East. He has never asserted our power, but has given way at every point where we have been threatened. His intimate friends often make the excuse for him that his hands have been full and that he could not, unless he chose to go to war with all the world, defend English interests wherever they were attacked. In order to get a free hand in Egypt he may have been forced to make concessions to other Powers which act on the principle *Do ut des*, and in this way we can explain his silence in the face of aggressions which he might have been expected to resent. But no obligations of honour or national interest forced him to undertake the conquest of South Africa, which has tied the hands of England and encouraged foreign

Powers to trade upon our embarrassments.

Our whole policy since the termination of the war between China and Japan has been a prolonged series of blunders. We refused to interfere ourselves, but allowed Russia and Germany to do so, and these two Powers were thus encouraged to establish themselves on the Chinese mainland. This did not so much matter in the case of Germany, as Kiaochow can never become the centre of a lucrative commerce; but the acquisition of Port Arthur by Russia marked the completion of a political revolution. So strongly was this felt to be the case by men who understood the East that an active agitation was set on foot three years ago in England to compel Lord Salisbury to check the Russian advance. One of the chief promoters of this agitation was Mr. Archibald Colquhoun, who brought to the work not only his own great personal familiarity with Chinese affairs but also the influence of the *Times*, and a considerable body of members on the Ministerial side of the House, inspired, it is whispered, by one or two well-known Ministers, followed the lead which had thus been set. I myself attended the dinners and

meetings of what was called "the China party," which talked very boldly for some time, but when, at one of the meetings, I ventured, by way of experiment, to suggest that we should call upon Lord Salisbury to go to war for Port Arthur, I could find no support. This is the usual end of mutinies among the Conservatives. The mutineers either have not a definite policy or are afraid of giving offence to the Ministers, and so the whole thing ends in smoke.

It is quite clear that if we really intended to make Russia hold her hand we ought to have turned her out of Port Arthur. Afterwards, it was too late to do anything, and the acquisition of Wei-Hai-Wei as a counterpoise was merely throwing dust into the eyes of the British public. Port Arthur was not merely a good harbour where Russia might securely carry on trade; it was the terminus of an immense Imperial work which had been carried on steadfastly by Russia through a long series of years, and which is likely to affect more powerfully than the opening of the Suez Canal itself the course of trade and industry in the East. By becoming

mistress of Port Arthur Russia establishes herself as a great military and maritime Power in the Northern Pacific, connected by a line of railroad with the Empire of Russia, and thus rendered independent of the maritime Powers of Europe. We have only recently seen with what ease she can now place large bodies of troops in Manchuria. When the railway has been thoroughly completed along its whole length the Empire of Russia will be consolidated from the Baltic to the Pacific, and trade, which for some centuries now has been conveyed by sea, will flow largely back again to its old land channels and make all Eastern Europe independent of English shipping.

So entirely does the surrender of Port Arthur to the Russians change the whole face of things in the East that since it took place I have myself urged the acceptance by England of a policy of conciliation, as that of resistance had failed. It is obvious now that Russia has secured the mastery of the whole of Northern and nearly the whole of Central Asia, and our statesmen should try to avail themselves of the great commercial undertaking the Russians have finished,

and to extend the line across Asia to Calcutta, as well as to Pekin. But English Ministers, not having had the courage to make Russia hold her hand while yet there was time, now think it a sagacious policy to murmur against what cannot be undone. I confess I am perfectly amazed at the fatuity of the action pursued by our Government. Mr. Arthur Balfour invited the Russians to come down to the Pacific; he did not, indeed, name Port Arthur, but everybody understood that that was the only place they could come down to. Then our Ambassador at Pekin begins a diplomatic quarrel with the Russian Minister, and he and the *Times* correspondent send home telegrams calculated to bring on war any day between England and Russia.

It is not surprising that the Imperial Court at Pekin grew distracted with the strange varieties of advice offered it by the foreign Ministers. Each Minister had his own special batch of favourite applicants for concessions, and his own foreign guard in readiness to back them up. So all the ante-rooms of the Imperial Palace were filled with company-

promoters, including many members of Parliament, and the poor Chinese found that their own land was in danger of being taken from them. Then they rose in rebellion, and the European Powers, in the name of Christianity and progress, are going to exact from them a shamefully exorbitant penalty by way of compensation, and then to establish at Pekin a larger international guard than ever. Is it not obvious that this guard is the root of the whole mischief, and that so long as it exists China can never recover her independence, while the seeds will be sown of innumerable jealousies and quarrels among the States of Europe?

The chief feature in the present situation in Asia is the perpetual rivalry between England and Russia, and the efforts of statesmen in both countries are directed, from time to time, towards substituting for that rivalry a friendly and lasting agreement. I have long been convinced that such an agreement might be brought about if England would take advantage of Russian enterprise in extending the Central Asian railways to Manchuria, and would propose that the

English and Russian systems should be linked together, and a direct overland-railway line built all the way to Calcutta. I have urged this matter on public attention in letters to the *Times* newspaper, and in papers read before learned societies in London, and my recent visit to India impressed so strongly upon me the absolute necessity for such a change as I advocated, that when I returned to England I sought an interview with Lord Salisbury on the subject. The Prime Minister received me with cordiality, and encouraged me to talk to him for a long time, not only on this question, but on public affairs generally. He expressed himself warmly in favour of a better understanding with Russia, and thought favourably of the plan I brought before him. I afterwards saw M. de Staal, the Russian Ambassador, at Chesham Place, and had a long conversation with him. He was quite familiar with the railway project, and said that all leading statesmen in both countries were in favour of an agreement which would put an end to perpetual conflicts; but, he added with a smile, "We have Jingoes in Russia as you have in England." This matter

is one of such supreme international importance that it is worthy to be discussed in a detailed and exhaustive manner.

The beneficent commerce of the overland, or caravan, routes through Asia was overthrown by the Tartar conquests of the 15th century, which depopulated vast regions of the continent, extinguished industry and order, and transformed the seats of mighty empires into haunts of desolation and anarchy. But, in the same century, Providence, working in its own mysterious way, opened a new route to India, that by the Cape of Good Hope, by which the commerce of the East with Europe could be securely and profitably carried on without the risk of disturbance from the wars that shook the continent of Asia.

From that time onwards the riches of India have been the prize of the strongest among the maritime Powers of Europe. England successively defeated all her rivals and gathered into her own hands the whole trade of the East, including not only India but China, where our commerce gained a foothold largely through military enterprises undertaken from India. This monopoly

was consolidated during the long struggle with France at the beginning of the 19th century, when English fleets swept the seas clear of every foreign ship, and it is certain that the immense wealth derived by our merchants from the Indian trade enabled England to bear with ease the colossal burdens imposed upon this country during the Napoleonic wars.

Now, it would appear that a new economical and commercial revolution is impending, and that maritime commerce is threatened with serious competition from the new trans-continental railways which Russia, in particular, is constructing with so much energy and foresight in Asia. The line across Siberia has already been carried, with only a break at Lake Beikal, as far as the commencement of the navigable water-way to Vladivostock, and, before five years more have elapsed, it is probable that direct communication will have been established between Moscow and Pekin, and the Chinese capital brought within a week's journey of Europe. This immense change will breathe fresh life into the dry bones of Asia, and cannot but revive the great overland trade

which had fallen for so many centuries into desuetude. Russian and German commercial travellers will swarm into the industrial districts of the Chinese Empire, delighted at being set free from the long and toilsome sea journey, and bringing goods with them for exchange against silk and tea, and gradually it will be found that Chinese commodities brought by this route will supply the wants of all Asia, and of Europe, as far at least as the latitude of Berlin and Vienna.

But what interests us to-day is the knowledge that the projects of the Russian Emperor do not stop short with the completion of the Siberian railway. A branch from the main line has been projected and commenced which will extend from Orenburg to Samarcand. This will complete, by a junction with the Transcaspian railway, the iron girdle with which all Central Asia will be embraced by Russia, and a vast region of fertile soil restored to civilisation. Moreover, it will bring the famous birthplace of Tamerlane within six days' unbroken land communication with Calais, and offer a tempting opportunity for the further

progress of the railway through Afghanistan to Peshawur, and for that linking-up of the Russian and Indian railway systems which would reduce to nine days the journey from London to Calcutta, and would thus confer incalculable benefits upon the whole of the East.

This has now become a practical possibility. It needs nothing more than the construction of a very few hundred miles through the passes of the Hindoo Khoosh and the Himalayas; and this would be an easy task for modern engineers. This route appears to me to possess unquestionable advantages over any other that can be named. Now that the Transcaspian Railway through Russian territory has been opened as far as Samarcand, and a branch made as far as Kushk, in close proximity to Herat, many people favour the completion of this line of communication as far as Chaman, below Candahar, which is the terminus of the Indian railway system. The line from Herat to Candahar, a distance not exceeding 500 miles, runs through a comparatively easy country, and could be built cheaply and expeditiously. But this line would debouch into India

at its extreme western limit, and would be complicated by the break of the Caspian Sea, across which goods and passengers must be conveyed by steamer. What is wanted is unbroken land communication from Calais to Calcutta, and this is supplied by a line through Orenburg, which avoids both the Caspian and the Sea of Aral, and runs for the greater part of the way through a region well known in ancient times for its fruitfulness.

A similar objection to that taken against the Transcaspian line might be urged against the new railway through Mesopotamia, for which a German syndicate has just obtained a concession at Constantinople. This line runs from the northern shore of the Bosporus to Baghdad and Basra, and no doubt the promoters contemplate ultimately extending it along the eastern coast of the Persian Gulf as far as Kurrachee. It seems an astonishing thing, when we reflect that a survey for a Euphrates railway was made sixty years ago, and that for the greater part of this century English influence has been supreme throughout Turkey in Asia, to find that Germany has now

stepped in and appropriated the whole of this fertile territory to herself, without, apparently, encountering any protest on the part of our Foreign Office. The Germans are our most formidable commercial competitors, and we can hardly view with equanimity the transfer to the enterprising German Empire of the right to develop the country along the Euphrates and Tigris valleys, and to gain access to the open waters of the Persian Gulf.

A line as far as Baghdad might not seem so objectionable, but this concession includes the seaport of Basra as well, and it has always, and rightly, been the instinctive tradition of our Foreign Office to view with the utmost jealousy the appropriation by any rival Power of a port at the mouth of any of the great navigable rivers of the world. It was the control of the Nile Valley that made the conquest of the Soudan so valuable to us, and there is not one of the great rivers of Africa and Asia which we have not annexed or thrown open to our commerce. To a maritime nation, indeed, this access to the alluvial valleys, watered by navigable streams, is as the breath of its nostrils. The Germans

tells us that freedom comes from the mountains, but I would add that civilisation dwells in the valleys. Population, industry, and wealth flourish on the banks of the rivers which carry down to the sea the commerce that is thence transported in our ocean steamers to all parts of the world. Hard political necessity can alone have moved Lord Salisbury to sanction this German advance. He has probably been influenced by two considerations—in the first place, he has established German authority in Syria and Mesopotamia, athwart the direct lines of advance of Russia to the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf: and, in the second place, he has secured for himself a free hand to do what he likes in Egypt and South Africa.

But, so far as communication with India is concerned, it does not appear to me that this route can ever interfere seriously with our over-sea commerce between England and Bombay. So long as the Bosporus is unbridged, transit through Turkey in Asia would always be embarrassed by a break of bulk, and all merchants are aware that this obstacle in

itself would neutralise most other advantages. Since the opening of the Suez Canal projects of a Euphrates Valley railway have fallen into disfavour in this country, because the immensely increased facilities for quick maritime communication have made it unlikely that any combined sea and land line to India will attract either goods or passengers. I come back, therefore, to my conclusion that the present over-sea route has no competition to fear except that from a through land line from Calais to Calcutta, which would enter India near its centre, and be continued down the great valley of the Ganges.

The most disquieting feature of all these railway projects is the evidence they afford of the immense commercial activity that is now spurring on both Germany and Russia to new enterprises. We know what a formidable rival Germany has become to this country in all parts of the world, but less heed has hitherto been paid in England to the prodigious industrial and trading development that has taken place in Russia. Even the Trans-Siberian railway has been promoted and pushed forward

for commercial rather than military ends, though I do not for a moment say that the latter have been lost sight of. When I was at Aden, a little more than a year ago, there were a number of vessels in the harbour flying the Russian flag, and I remarked to a Russian diplomatist, who was travelling eastward in the P. and O. steamer, that Russia appeared to be sending a good many troops to Port Arthur. He invited me to accompany him and see the ships for myself. I did so, and found these vessels were crowded with emigrants from Southern Russia, fathers of families with their wives and children and household goods, who were on their way to take up their residence in the country opened by the new Siberian line of railway. These emigrants are largely helped by the Government, which supplies them with houses, plots of land, and agricultural implements free, and relieves them of all taxation for several years. They will form a connecting link between Russia and Northern China, where already a docile and industrial population provide a trade which is rapidly increasing in volume.

The Siberian project was probably inspired

by the great success which has attended the completion of the Transcaspian railway through Russia's new possessions in Central Asia. We can most of us remember the airs of superiority that English politicians used to give themselves in talking of Russian adventures in the almost unknown country beyond the Caspian. To take a conspicuous instance, the Duke of Argyll ridiculed as "Mervousness" the apprehensions entertained by far-sighted statesmen as to the probable effects of the Russian conquest of Merv. But Russia established and consolidated her possessions up to and beyond the Oxus, and bound them together by the railway to Samarcand, and now we find that, instead of "gorgons and hydras and chimeras dire," this country of the Turkomans is fruitful and prosperous, and that a chain of cotton plantations exists where once there was nothing but desert. Not only have the Russians turned the whole of this territory to account, but they have pushed their trade successfully into Khorassan and the whole of Northern Persia. They have built good roads from the Caspian to both Meshed and Teheran, and all the reports of our consular officers show

that Russian trade is increasing, while English trade is falling off in this part of the world.

The new Russo-Persian loan shows how Russia is consolidating her financial position in Persia. The Russians have also secured from the Shah of Persia the renewal for another term of five years of the exclusive right to construct railways in Persia, and their administration is everywhere marked by progress, while British trade is content with the slow and uncertain transit of our goods over a thousand miles of roadless and badly-policed territory from Bushire and Bunder Abbas. Yet I have been assured on excellent authority that a good many years ago the Shah of Persia made an application to our Foreign Office for the investment of British capital in the construction of Persian railways; but this proposal was treated with contempt. The greater intelligence shown by Russia is already having the effect of transferring a considerable portion of our trade to Russia. Formerly, tea from China was brought to Bombay, and shipped thence to the Persian Gulf ports for conveyance by land into Central Asia. Now, however, the middleman has discovered for himself that by

forwarding this tea from Colombo up the Red Sea, and round to the port of Batoum in the Black Sea, he can obtain a more secure and expeditious, and a cheaper, transit for his goods by the Trans-caucasian railway as far as the Caspian, and thence into Central Asia; and this trade has been lost to Bombay.

We have perhaps been accustomed in this country to fix our eyes too exclusively on the advantages of maritime communication, and to underrate the giant strides which Continental nations are making by means of their railways. Let me take an illustration of what I mean. When I first visited Venice, thirty years ago, I found that by far the best mode of conveyance for goods purchased there was by steamer to London, and all trade with Italy was practically carried on by English ships. Now, our consular reports from Italy repeat year after year the old story of the success in trade achieved by the foreigner, and strong complaints are made of the want of enterprise of the British merchant. But is there not another and more natural cause for the decay of British trade? If we turn over eyes to the map of Europe, and we shall see

that, largely through the energy and ingenuity of Swiss railway engineers, the Alps, which once shut off Italy by land from the rest of Europe, have now ceased to exist. This chain of mountains has not been levelled; but, what comes to the same thing, it has been tunnelled in half a dozen different places from the Mont Cenis to the Brenner Pass, and the success of these tunnels has now led to the construction of another route through the Simplon. Now, any one who visits the Riviera can see for himself that the Alpine railways, and especially the St. Gothard route, bring swarms of German excursionists into Southern France and Northern Italy; and the German traveller is becoming a more important person in this part of the Continent than even the English or the American traveller. A similar change has taken place in the course of trade. Italy now sends vast quantities of her agricultural produce over the Alps into the thickly-populated valley of the Rhine and the countries of Central Europe, and she takes in return the manufactures of France and Germany, to the prejudice of British trade, which can no

longer compete with the cheap land traffic.

A similar revival of land traffic seems likely to change the face of all Asia. What we are witnessing, in fact, is the renascence of Asia, and it troubles one to reflect that England, which was once supreme in Asia, is taking no part in this great movement. Are we, in the pursuit of a shadowy suzerainty in South Africa, letting slip the substantial advantages which lie ready to our hand in an infinitely richer continent? At all events, we let other Powers take the initiative, while we remain indifferent and apathetic. It was not always so. More than sixty years ago the Court of Directors of the East India Company sent Alexander Burnes to Cabul and Bokhara to report upon the new markets that might be opened for Indian trade in Central Asia; but now every Asiatic market outside our own Indian border has been seized by our rivals, and the Indian Government is so much pre-occupied with high politics and high jinks at Simla that it leaves trade severely alone.

Our inaction is, of course, largely due to the unfortunate relations which we maintain in

India with the Ameer of Afghanistan. Anglo-Indian statesmen cherish, for the most part, a rooted conviction that we must leave the Ameer to go his own way without interference from us; and to such an extent is this doctrine of total abstinence carried that we have actually kept lying at Chaman, the terminus of the Indian Railway system, beyond the tunnel which we have constructed through the Khojah Amran range, all the railway materials for the building of an extension to Candahar, which we, nevertheless, do not venture to make. The latest news we have from Afghanistan is that the late Ameer actually broke up the roads from Herat to Khushk on the Russian border, to stop the growing trade in that direction. Now, Afghanistan is simply an isolated remnant of barbarism, enclosed between the two great living empires of England and Russia, and employing the mutual jealousy of these two Powers to maintain its independence. The rule of the late Ameer was not much less cruel or oppressive than that of the Khalifa, whom we have just destroyed in the Soudan. Yet we support the Afghan ruler with a very large

subsidy, and in return he places heavy duties on our commerce, and stirs up the frontier tribes to make war upon us.

How much longer is this petty chief to be allowed to block the high road of civilisation, and to prevent the opening of free and friendly intercourse between England and Russia? A joint representation from these two Powers at the Court of Cabul would force the Ameer to consent at once to the construction of railways throughout his dominions. Calcutta and Kurrachee would then become the seaports for Russian goods desiring an outlet on the Indian Ocean, and India would be able to conduct once more a large and lucrative trade in her own articles of merchandise with the Persian and Central Asian markets. I have heard it said that through railways to India ought not to be built, because we may some day go to war with Russia. On the same principle, express trains ought to cease running from Paris to Berlin, because some day war may again break out between France and Germany. The objection has been made that the linking up of the Indian and Russian

railway lines would involve a much larger military expenditure on our Indian defences. But even now, while the Russians are hundreds of miles away, we watch their every movement with suspicion and alarm, and maintain a great army in constant readiness to resist their advance towards India. Our preparations for war need not be more formidable if the two empires were no longer separated by a belt of neutral territory, and if both Powers well understood that the first step beyond a fixed line would be equivalent to a declaration of war.

I am afraid that the only real obstacle to the completion of a through overland line is the unwillingness of our Foreign Office to move out of its accustomed groove, and to exercise a little ordinary foresight in dealing with a perfectly changed condition of affairs. Lord Salisbury was no doubt in the right twenty years ago when he advised his fellow-countrymen to study large maps ; but now the world has grown much smaller, and the great capitals of Asia (Pekin Samarcand, and Calcutta) have been, or can be, brought within a week's easy journey from

Moscow. It is imperative, therefore, that we should adapt ourselves to the changed circumstances of the time. Mr. Arthur Balfour, a year ago, when speaking of the settled policy of our Foreign Office, made use of the unfortunate expression, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." This maxim was, I believe, the favourite motto of a king known in history as Ethelred the Unready, and, if the Foreign Office accepts it as a guide, it accounts for much that has happened since Mr. Balfour made his avowal. But I think you will agree with me that the Department which administers the foreign affairs of a mighty Empire should be animated by a policy of greater courage, determination, and enterprise.

CHAPTER VIII.

India — Lord Curzon — The Land Settlement and Indian Famines — Frontier Policy — Afghanistan.

VIII.

Indian affairs have attracted of late years an increasing share of public attention, and the Imperial problems they present for solution are beginning to clamour loudly for debate. It is easy and pleasant to accept the outward signs of loyalty on the part of the princes and people of India as conclusive proofs that that country is convinced that it is governed by what Sir Henry Fowler is fond of calling the best of all possible administrations. But observers who look below the surface are well aware that India was never more profoundly disaffected to British rule than she is at the present moment, that she was never governed with less regard for the wishes and interests of the subject-races, and that it is only the hopelessness of resistance which prevents the outbreak of formidable popular insurrections. The old good feeling between conqueror and conquered, which thirty years ago seemed to be of constant and rapid growth has now quite died out, and the gulf between European and native is more firmly fixed than ever

The confidence which the native community used to feel in the good fortune and the power of the Sirkar has been broken, and, despite the hypocritical flatteries of interested courtiers, the native of India, who used to accept English domination as a divine institution, has begun to ask himself what advantages he derives from the rule of the alien.

This feeling is largely due to a sentiment of despair caused by the apathy with which the House of Commons has treated Indian questions. India is unfit for representative institutions, but for this very reason she is entitled to expect that her affairs shall be treated by the Imperial Parliament with intelligent consideration. I am bound to say that there is now a bias, even on the Ministerial side of the House of Commons, in favour of treating India generously, but this inclination is not sufficiently strong to take the form of active and energetic action; and I have known several occasions on which members who have cried shame with me beforehand against instances in which India has been treated badly have ended by going meekly into the lobby to vote for the policy laid down by Lord George

Hamilton at the bidding of his twice-pensioned and thrice-decorated Council in Whitehall.

Immediately after the election of 1895 I came into collision with the Government by criticising in a hostile spirit the invasion and annexation of Chitral. I am by no means opposed to a well-conceived and resolutely pursued frontier policy, but the series of successive advances and retirements which the Government of India has executed upon the territories of tribes which were really well disposed towards us seemed to me to combine perpetual irritation with most extravagant expenditure. Another quarrel I soon after had with Ministers arose out of the shabbiness of the great English Government in taking away native Indian troops for the wars of conquest in which we engage in Africa and maintaining them at the expense of the people of India. On this occasion I seconded the vote of censure moved from the front Opposition bench; and, although we were soundly beaten on a division, it is a significant fact that the Imperial Government has never, from that day to this, ventured to move a single Sepoy out of India for service in Africa without taking care

that the cost of such an enterprise should be borne by the English Treasury. The Frontier Policy question came up again for discussion with reference to the late Sir William Lockhart's costly and inconclusive operations. I once more interposed, and warned the Government of India that they were going on the wrong tack altogether. I think I may flatter myself that this protest had some effect, for in conversation with Lord George Hamilton some little time afterwards I said to him, "You are getting into a nice mess in India," and he replied, "Oh, no; we shall soon get the business quietly settled. We are going to grant the tribesmen very easy terms. In fact we shall settle the matter on your lines." When the official correspondence was published, it turned out that the Secretary of State had, in point of fact, restrained the impetuosity of the Government of India and forced them to withdraw their troops within their own frontier. Soon afterwards Mr. George Curzon was appointed to the high position of Viceroy of India. But he is far too important a personage to be disposed of at the end of a paragraph.

Lord Curzon, the present Viceroy of India, is

one of the very few men who in recent years have made a considerable Parliamentary reputation. Everything from the beginning worked in his favour. It is often said by people who do not know English society that this is a democratic age, but as a matter of fact an English nobleman, although his rank no longer brings with it much direct political power, enjoys a social influence such as his class never before possessed, and has from early youth opportunities of gaining distinction which are hopelessly beyond the reach of ordinary men. The son of an English peer begins life on one of the highest steps of the ladder on which a mere plebeian spends his whole life in trying to secure a foothold. Mr. George Curzon was born, so to speak, in the purple, and has always turned this advantage of the right of birth to the fullest use. With a pleasing appearance, a good voice and a ready gift of speech, he did justice to the clearness of insight of Lord Salisbury, who introduced him to public life as soon as he had made for himself a name at the University. But, with a prudence unusual in young men, Mr. Curzon borrowed

the art of the Dictator Sulla, who preferred to call himself fortunate rather than skilful, and by attributing his success to his good luck disarmed the ill-will of the populace. He has always shown a magnanimous spirit, disclaiming any special merit, and, though much attacked and satirised, has never displayed impatience or irritation against his assailants. But no man, to whatever caste he may belong, can make his mark in English public without possessing exceptional abilities, and Mr. Curzon soon raised himself to distinction as an orator, administrator, and man of letters. Nobody could have shown more industry and energy than he did in collecting and digesting every kind of information, or in qualifying himself by travel and reading for the highest political positions. His prospects, consequently, soon became so bright at home that surprise was felt when he accepted the Viceroyalty of India, and so banished himself from the House of Commons. The usual explanation of his conduct was that he had chosen this great post because it would give him an independence which he could not enjoy as a member of the home Government. But it

soon became clear that nothing was further from his intention than to take up the attitude of antagonism to Ministers at Whitehall which distinguished so many of his predecessors and which so frequently caused embarrassment to the Imperial Administration. When he first went to India he was inclined to resent very warmly the advances made by France and Russia in the Persian Gulf, but Lord Salisbury soon threw cold water on his efforts to raise this issue to the rank of an Imperial question. From that time to this Lord Curzon has been emphatically a good boy, and has never given the worthy gentlemen upon the Treasury bench the slightest cause for uneasiness. He has surprised and disconcerted many of his former admirers by resolutely setting his face against a fire-eating frontier policy, and by withdrawing within the Indian borders the troops who were stationed in districts where their very presence was a constant source of turbulence. Lord Gorge Hamilton may have taken the initiative in the conception of this new policy, but Lord Curzon has carried it out boldly and conscientiously, and this is all the more to his

credit because anything that seemed like withdrawal on the frontier could not but be fiercely resented by the military feeling of Anglo-Indians.

Another conspicuous example of the spirit of unquestioning subordination to home influences which animates the present Viceroy was given in his ready obedience to the imperious demand of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord George Hamilton that we should, without a moment's delay, pass an Act imposing countervailing duties on sugar imported from foreign States into India, and so compel the Indian people to buy dear sugar for the benefit of the colony of Mauritius. Although Lord Curzon lately, in what must have been a tone of mockery, declared himself anxious to consult public opinion in Bombay, he passed his Sugar Bill without even taking the trouble to wait for the opinions of his own official advisers in Western India. Indeed the bill would have passed without criticism if I had not called attention to it as an instance of the way in which the present Government is always nibbling at Protection. My attention was first called to the matter by some native merchants in Bombay when I revisited that city in 1899.

The mercantile community of Western India had been inoculated with the English love of freedom, and they had been alarmed to hear that the Government of India contemplated the imposition of countervailing duties on the imports of sugar. When I returned home I found that a law to carry out this purpose had already been framed, and that the Viceroy intended to pass it by a *coup de main*. I had the greatest difficulty in forcing the matter on public notice, but finally by perseverance I succeeded in raising a debate, in which I was supported by the whole strength of the Opposition.

My personal relations with Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman had always been of a pleasant and friendly character, and, much to my relief, the leader of the Opposition came to the rescue when I had put some searching questions to the Government and received no satisfactory reply. Sir Henry asked Mr. Balfour to name a day for a debate on the subject, and this is, of course, a request with which, when made from such a quarter, the Government is bound to comply. A date was fixed, and Sir Henry

Fowler at once gave notice, on behalf of the Front Opposition bench, that, when the debate was opened, he should move an amendment condemning the proposed duties. The country by this time was thoroughly awake to what was going on. I had issued a manifesto which was published in all the papers, and to which the *Times* did me the honour of devoting a long and elaborate leading article, in which it attempted to controvert my views. Lord Farrar wrote me a warm letter of encouragement, asking me to supply him with detailed information, the Secretary to the Cobden Club, Mr. Harold Cox, gave me his able assistance, and Mr. Rogers, the head of a leading confectionery firm in the City, kept me well informed as to the sentiments of the trade. At the request of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H. Fowler wrote and asked me to second his motion.

I hesitated to do so until I had consulted Mr. Balfour, but, that gentleman assured me that, although it would be a strong step for a supporter of the Government to second a motion of want of confidence, still he recognized that I had a right to take an independent line

of action on Indian affairs, and he should not resent my conduct if I chose to do what the Opposition desired. I then felt free to act according to my inclination, and I followed Sir Henry Fowler and made a speech which aroused the most furious animosity on the Treasury bench, and especially in the breast of Mr. Chamberlain, who, in his reply, delivered with less than his usual coolness, dismayed many men on the Ministerial benches by the uncompromising spirit of opposition to Free Trade which he exhibited. Mr. Reed's picture in *Punch* of Mr. Balfour, Mr. Chamberlain, and Lord George Hamilton, "three life-long Free Traders," as, with amusing inconsistency, they called themselves, "listening to a Free Trade speech," was one of the cleverest ever drawn by that accomplished artist. I need not say that we were soundly beaten in the division lobby, but that was a matter of no moment.

The work which I took in hand when I commenced the agitation was done. Anyone who reads the speeches delivered by Lord Curzon in the Calcutta Legislative Council will see that the original intention of the

Government was not to confine this futile and silly legislation to India, but to extend it to the whole Empire. The Viceroy contemptuously ridiculed the "fetish of Free Trade," and expressed a hope that what they were doing would serve as a model for the mighty world, and convince England in particular of the error of her ways. The results showed that the English people have not the slightest intention of abandoning the commercial policy of the last fifty years. The Associated Chambers of Commerce, by an overwhelming majority, passed a resolution protesting against countervailing duties, and the Government very prudently resolved to have nothing more to do with them. The Liverpool clique who are always agitating against bounties, made some mention of countervailing duties when the tax on sugar was raised, but Sir Michael Hicks-Beach promptly put his foot upon and crushed them. The outcry, in fact, at the discovery the people of this country had made against any taxes that would affect the many and great industries which owe their prosperity to cheap sugar was quite sufficient to frighten a prudent Chancellor

of the Exchequer, and we may now happily consider that the danger of this imposition of a countervailing duty on sugar in England may be said to have passed away.

A more serious illustration of Lord Curzon's subserviency to the home Government is afforded by his neglect to ask for English help in moderating the effects of last year's famine. Lord George Hamilton has always taken up, with regard to the famine, the perfectly safe position that he was ready to grant aid from England if India asked for it. But it is at the same time perfectly evident from Sir M. Hicks-Beach's statement in the House of Commons that the Viceroy had received a hint not to put forward a request which might embarrass an Imperial Government which wanted all its money for South Africa. On this hint Lord Curzon acted loyally. It is curious that the Viceroy made no attempt, in the long speech in which he sang the praises of the Indian Administration for the famine relief work it had accomplished, to say how many people actually died last year. His speech was full, as usual, of a fine flow of rhetoric, but he does not explain why, if the

hard-worked Indian officials were able to do so much, they could not have done more with the assistance of men and money from England. The Viceroy shows no appreciation of the fact that the famine has brought economic ruin upon a large part of India, although he might have read the letter in which the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Mr. Monteath, says, that the once flourishing and energetic community of Western India, numbering some 15,000,000 of human beings, has been reduced to a state in which society must be reconstructed from its very foundations.

The Finance Commission, of which Sir Antony Macdonell had been appointed Chairman by the Viceroy, has now issued its report, and the admissions it contains are all the more damaging on account of the evident desire of the Commission to make things as pleasant as possible for the Government they serve. Public criticism in India fastens upon the rigid and inelastic character of the land assessment as the one great cause of its harshness. In average years, it is admitted, the assessment is not excessive, but in bad seasons it presses with

merciless weight upon the peasant cultivator, who is forced by it into a state of indebtedness, from which he can never shake himself free. Hence the chronic state of poverty in which the ryot lives, and his dependence upon the village "sowcar," or money-lender.

The curse of the ryot, say the officials on the other hand, is his thriftlessness, and his extravagant habit of spending far more than he can afford on feasts and ornaments on the occasion of a marriage in his family. But anyone acquainted with the details of life in a Hindoo village is aware that the money spent on such festivities amounts merely to the provision of sweetmeats and a few trinkets, and costs very little. What the ryot really fears is the pitiless regularity of the demand made by the State for a rent which is so heavy that it leaves him no margin for saving in good years. Sir Antony Macdonell's Commission frankly acknowledges that in Bombay, where the pressure of famine in recent years has been most severely felt, the incidence of the land assessment "is full," and it "cannot be collected in short years without forcing the cultivators into debt."

This is, of course, a complete condemnation of the whole system. If a ryot, once only in every five years, on the recurrence of famines, is forced to borrow money to replenish his stock and keep himself going, it is plain that he must become permanently impoverished. The money-lender has hitherto kept him supplied with funds on the security of his land, which he has had the right to transfer, but this security Lord Northcote's Government in Bombay now proposes to take away from him. A Bill has been introduced into the Bombay Legislative Council which has created an extraordinary amount of agitation in Western India, because, while professing to relieve the ryot from the clutches of the sowcar, it really deprives him of the only property he can pledge when bad times come. The Bombay peasantry have been absolutely ruined by the famine, and are quite unable to pay the arrears of land revenue. Then steps forward the Government, and, in the true spirit of a usurer, declares that those farms on which arrears exist shall be forfeited, but that the Government will regrant them to the occupier on the condition that

he gives up his hereditary right of transfer. He would, in this way, lose his tenure of the land as a perpetual tenant, and would become a mere tenant, who could be ousted whenever he ceased to pay the yearly assessment in full.

There is nothing new in the system proposed by Lord Northcote's Government. It was put in force thousands of years ago by Joseph, the astute Jewish Prime Minister of Pharaoh, when the famine was sore in the land of Egypt. Joseph induced the people to sell their birthright to Pharaoh in return for the grant of food to themselves and their families, and so, as Holy Writ pithily puts the result of the transaction, "the land became Pharaoh's." Lord Northcote's Government are resolved, in like manner, that the land in future shall become theirs, and not the ryots'. Lord Northcote, with engaging simplicity, leaves us in no doubt as to what is intended. "It is quite true," he says, "that a cultivator under the new tenure will in the future have less security to offer the money-lender, but the obvious reply is that the 'sowcar' will lend less money." Precisely so. Strange as it may

appear to Lord Northcote, the ryot would rather trust himself to the tender mercies of the "sowcar" than to those of a grasping and unsympathetic Government.

Five of the non-official members of the Bombay Council, after vehemently protesting against the Bill, left the room by way of protest when it was passed by the official members, but this step will be considered in these days a matter of no moment by the official class. Do we not know by the example of what has taken place in Malta that the officials are always right, and that the people never know what is good for them? This is the pure religion of modern statesmanship. Things were different a generation ago, when Colonel Baird Smith converted Lord Canning and Sir Charles Wood to the humane and beneficent policy of permanently settling the land revenue all over India. This policy would have been carried into effect at that time but for the sudden rise of the value of land in Bombay as a consequence of the American War. The Government imagined that this rise would last for ever, and so a great opportunity was lost.

Yet whoever has lived in India knows that for the sake of the Government itself it were well to dissociate the civil servant from the work of collecting the land revenue. The Government is the worst of all absentee landlords, and nothing makes it so unpopular in India as its yearly demand for rent. Whatever good and kindly work is done for the people by English administrators, the one drawback is always remembered, that they have an interest in doing it because it will increase the rent paid to the State. The trail of the land tax is over it all.

One great source of the ryot's impoverishment is the steady and officially admitted decrease in the fertility of the soil, which no steps are taken, by the skilful application of natural or artificial manures, to restore to its original fruitfulness. But there is one cause of the steady increase in the poverty of India which has not yet received the notice it deserves. Indeed I do not know that any public man has ever taken it into account, and I offer the idea now as original, with the hope that it will provoke public discussion. The intermeddling of the Government of India with the currency of that country has done the

greatest possible mischief, and made the helplessness of the ryot worse than ever. The Government has tried in vain to force upon the people of India a gold currency which they do not want and will not have, and by stinting the supply of silver has caused immense inconvenience and disturbance to trade. But what I would particularly insist upon is that the ryot is practically defrauded by the Government when he is forced to sell his crop at a fixed rate of rupees to the pound sterling.

The only way in which he can dispose of his crop is to sell it to the native capitalist, who in his turn sells the bills of lading to one of the exchange banks, which will only buy them at the fixed official rate of 1s. 4d. for a rupee. The margin of profit left to the poor ryot, already small enough, is now artificially still further reduced.

This is perfectly clear to anyone who considers that the ryot receives payment in pounds sterling which he can only exchange into rupees, the currency he requires, at an over-valuation of 16d. to the rupee instead of 11½d., the fair market value. Thus, the ryot only gets about

thirteen rupees to the pound instead of over twenty, and the value of the produce of his land is correspondingly reduced. The depreciation of silver, though causing inconvenience to Government and a grievous loss to the European official or merchant who wished to remit money to England, conferred a large bonus upon the Indian cultivator. This has now been taken away from him, and at the same time his rent has been raised by fully 25 per cent. Is it not obvious that his condition must have been permanently impoverished by the action of the Government?

Since I began writing this book I have found that I am by no means singular in the view I have taken, both here and in the House of Commons, that the attempt to inflate the rupee by giving it a fixed exchangeable value is a mistake. Mr. Wadia, of Bombay, a well-known financier and man of business, says in a recent paper:—"The total exports of India last year came to 104 crores of rupees at 16d. to the rupee, but at the true value of the coin, *viz.*, 11½d., the producers would have received 146 crores, so evidently a loss of about 42 crores, or, say, *thirty millions*

sterling, is inflicted on the country on exports alone. If fixity of exchange was the only motive, why not fix the rupee at 11½d. as Japan has done." Writing to me by last mail, Mr. Wadia says that, while the Bombay spinner is paying wages at the rate of 16d. to the rupee, his rival in Japan is only paying 11½d., and can, therefore, afford to undersell him. Sir Antony Macdonnell said before the Parliamentary Committee on the Currency that taxation might be increased in India if people had to pay their taxes in an over-valued rupee, but, as this would be produced unconsciously, he did not think the people would be "conscious of any additional taxation." I wonder if Sir A. Macdonnell and other civil servants were "unconscious" when their salaries were depreciated by a movement of exchange in the opposite direction; they made an outcry sufficient to rend the sky then.

The Indian Government has done this act of injustice to the Indian peasantry because its attention has always been fixed exclusively on the inconvenience caused to itself by a heavy fall in exchange, and has not taken sufficiently

into account the general well-being of the people. Its great aim has been to keep the treasury full rather than the pockets of the people, and it has never perceived how much good it might do to itself by letting the currency alone and devoting its energies to a wise and liberal assessment of the land. It is, unfortunately, as true now as it was a hundred years ago that there is no greater curse to India than the able revenue officer.

A crisis, however, has now arisen in international politics which will profoundly disturb the easy repose enjoyed by the Government of India, and will put Lord Curzon's statesmanship sharply to the proof. The death of the Ameer Abdur Rahman of Cabul is an event of grave moment, which cannot fail to affect all Central Asia. The deceased Ameer was a bloodthirsty despot of an even worse type than the Mahdi of the Soudan, whom we put to death for his crimes against Egyptian civilisation. But it was our interest to maintain a strong ruler on the throne of Afghanistan, and so we winked at his misdeeds. Abdur Rahman knew his business thoroughly, and had gauged to a nicety the

character of Lord Lytton, who as Viceroy of India had invited him to fill the vacant throne. He refused to be made king at Cabul unless Candahar and Herat were also given over to him, and, as Lord Lytton was as anxious to get out of Afghanistan as he had been two years before to get into the country, he accepted Abdur Rahman's terms, and even sacrificed our own friends to him. It is now claimed by all the apologists of the Indian Government that the deceased Prince justified the choice made him by remaining all his life a firm friend to the English alliance. Like all Oriental potentates, the Ameer could keep his own counsel, and we need not accept too implicitly the rose-coloured accounts given of him by the European adventurers whom he employed, and whom, though he paid them well, he treated as the dirt beneath his feet. Nor is it likely that he opened his mind freely to Lord Curzon, who had made a journey to Cabul to interview him. Indeed, there is a story current, which may best be described as unprintable, of the coarse way in which the Ameer expressed his contempt for a visitor

who had reeled out to him a string of rhetorical common-places.

There is sound truth in Lord Roberts's remark, that no Afghan living can be trusted. Abdur Rahman's main idea, it may safely be said, was to keep both Russia and England at a safe distance. He wished, like our own Charles the Second, to remain a King till he died, and so he dissembled his love and hate. An Afghan is always a shrewd bargainer, and so he took advantage of our wish to secure his alliance by demanding ever fresh concessions, which were nearly always granted. He got his pension doubled, and was given permission to establish an arsenal at Cabul, where he prepared enormous stores of excellent rifles and munitions of war. He was also allowed to import through Calcutta batteries of field-guns for the re-armament of his artillery. He thus made Afghanistan a far more formidable power than she had ever been before. What he gave us in return it is difficult to say. He has been more than suspected of having secretly encouraged the frontier risings, with which the Government of India of late years has found it increasingly difficult to deal. What is

certain is that, by diffierential duties, he has strangled the transit trade between British India and the states of Central Asia. He has never granted us permission to lay down the railway from the Indian frontier to Candahar, though all the material for this easy extension, including even the framework of the stations, has been lying ready on the spot for twenty years; and Lord Curzon, in despair, has been driven into projecting a coast line through Seistan to Eastern Persia, which it is perfectly childish to imagine can ever come into serious competition with the short roads from the Caspian to Teheran and Khorassan which have been opened by Russia.

So subservient had we become to the will of the Ameer, that we actually congratulated him on having told the Russians, who wished to extend their Transcaspian Railway to Herat, that the camels and asses, which had served the needs of his ancestors, were good enough for him, though it is notorious that Lord Curzon had been trying to impress upon him the advantages of opening his country to railways. So Afghanistan continued, up to the

day of his death, to block the principal highway of civilisation in Asia, and to rejoice in its barbarous isolation. The new Prince, Habibullah, will no doubt desire to maintain the state of things established by the late Ameer. But personal character counts for everything in Afghanistan, and of Habibullah's character we as yet know nothing. He was kept in such strict subordination by his late father that his real disposition will only become known now that he is his own master. Assuming that all we hear about his virtue is true, we must still remember that Afghanistan is a very turbulent country, and that the people are unwilling to submit to the rule of any one man until he has proved his fitness to govern. The Ameer tried to conciliate the goodwill of many powerful families to his son by marrying him to no fewer than seven different wives; but family alliances of this kind are apt rather to breed than to allay rivalries in a land where the Zenana is a hotbed of intrigue.

Moreover, the prize of getting the mastery of the troops and the Arsenal and Treasury of Cabul will in all likelihood prove an irresistible

temptation to many a powerful chief. I do not say for a moment that we should interfere in any of these tribal or dynastic fueds; our best course is to let the rivals fight their quarrel out by themselves. But the situation demands constant care and watchfulness. Lord Curzon is evidently on the alert, for he has already mobilized two field batteries at Peshawar. But the British garrison of India is now exceptionally weak. The troops lent to South Africa have not yet been returned, and other regiments are now under orders to sail from Bombay. The establishment of the remaining regiments in India must be far below their normal strength, for, owing to the strain of the war, the system of sending yearly reliefs from England has broken down, or, which amounts to the same thing, such immature youths have been sent out as reinforcements that they have been packed off home again as quite unfit for Indian service. It shows the straits to which the Government is reduced that a bonus of £16 a head, or £10 with a furlough to England, has been offered to every time-expired man who will re-enlist for a further term of service. We may

well pray, then, that the British Empire may be delivered from another Afghan War. The mutual jealousy of Russia and England may bring upon us such a calamity, and I have endeavoured, in the preceding chapter on China and our position in the Far East, to point out by what means these two great Powers may be brought to act together in Central Asia. If England and Russia were jointly to put pressure upon the Ameer to open out his country, it is improbable that such advice would be disregarded.

To use force, in case of need, to compel the Ameer to sanction the construction of an international railway, might imperil his position, but there is one concession we might make to him which would carry great weight in his favour. The chief desire of the late Ameer was to be recognised by England as an independent sovereign, to escape from the tutelage of the India Office, and to be repesented by a minister resident in London. It was to press this request upon the Imperial Government that he sent the Shazada to England some years ago, and this prince, Nasrulla, returned to Cabul in disgrace because he had failed in his mission.

Lord Rosebery, I am told, was willing to consent, but Lord Salisbury succeeded to power, and the matter fell through. We have here, however, the kind of bribe that would be most acceptable to both Prince and people in Afghanistan. We know how much an Indian prince thinks of the addition of a gun or two to his salute, and we may rest assured that the Ameer would be delighted beyond measure with any accession to his dignity. The Government of India has affairs enough at home to occupy all its attention, and it can easily afford to hand over Afghanistan to the Imperial Government, more especially as in Central Asia its authority is already overlapped by that of the Foreign Office.

CHAPTER IX.

The Present Political Situation—How to End the War.

IX.

The general election of 1900 brought to an end my Parliamentary career as member for Cardiff. For some time previously, owing to the open letters I addressed to Lord Salisbury, denouncing the war, and to the vote I gave in the House of Commons condemning the policy of Mr. Chamberlain, my relations with my constituents had been greatly strained. The local Committee of the Conservative party demanded my resignation. In taking this action, they arrogated to themselves a power to control the member for the borough which they did not possess, and which it was never intended that they should possess. I had been elected by the whole community, not by any committee; I had fulfilled all the pledges I made at the general election of 1895; and I repudiated the claim of a small committee to call upon me to resign on account of my political action regarding a question which had only arisen since 1895, and was not before the country at the election. I requested the

committee to convene a public meeting, which I promised to attend and to speak in my own defence; but this they persistently refused to do, and simply went on passing resolutions at clubs and committee meetings. I therefore thought myself justified in retaining my seat till a fresh general election remitted the matter to the decision of the constituencies.

I should have come forward as an independent candidate in 1890, but I was struck down in the summer of that year by a severe illness, which quite incapacitated me for several months from taking part in public affairs. My health, now happily restored, had given me much anxiety for nearly three years, and I went to India at the end of 1898 to try if a sea voyage would do me any good. It was on this occasion that my many friends in London did me the honour of entertaining me at a public dinner in the Hotel Cecil, at which Sir Thomas Sutherland took the chair, and my old friend Mr. S. Digby, of Bombay, kindly acted as Hon. Secretary. This dinner was attended by nearly all the distinguished Anglo-Indians in London, by many members of Parliament, and by delegates from

Oldham and Cardiff. Lord Roberts and the present Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, wrote letters expressing their regret that they could not come to the dinner; and the next day, at the Club, Lord Curzon warmly congratulated me on having had such a representative and authoritative gathering. The voyage did me no good, and finally I was laid up abroad for six months. I took no part in the general election, and said not a word to influence the result at Cardiff, but my friends there showed what they thought by changing my majority of 1,000 in 1895 into a minority for the Conservative candidate of 1,000 in 1900. Since the election I have been released from all party bonds, and have felt it my duty, as I strongly sympathised with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in his desire for a reasonable settlement in South Africa, to sever my connexion with the Carlton Club, of which I had been a member for twenty years, and to which I was endeared by long association and by many warm friendships.

If, then, I conclude these reminiscences with some political observations, it will be understood that I do so as a perfectly independent

critic. It is not given to everyone to follow the illustrious example of Lord Rosebery, and to make only occasional forays into politics, varied by long intervals devoted to ploughing a lonely furrow, or to the composition of elaborate essays on the virtues of King Alfred or the faults of Napoleon. Versed, as I have been, in public affairs all my life, I cannot willingly stand aside when the State requires that every man should contribute his mite towards the formation of a common stock of public discussion and intelligence.

The public mind at present is in a very irritated and uneasy state. Recent elections conclusively show that the glamour of the war has passed away, and that, while the country would be ashamed not to fight the miserable business to a finish, it is heartily disgusted with what has been done and is now going on in South Africa, and would gladly accept any reasonable terms of accommodation with the Boers. All the shouting is over. We have come to our senses, and are beginning to treat the war in a serious spirit. We have, in fact, been rudely awakened from our vainglorious dreams.

It is humiliating to discover, as we have done, that we, a nation of 60,000,000 of human beings (including the great colonies), with overwhelming force and inexhaustible resources at our command, cannot break down the resistance of a handful of peasants in South Africa. The war drifts on from month to month, and the lavish expenditure alone supplies food for thought. The total addition already made to the National Debt is 175 millions, besides the large sums raised by increased taxation, and Parliament has been summoned to meet in January in order to vote more money. This colossal expenditure has hitherto brought us in no return. The War has hardly produced a general whose reputation has not been tarnished, and the condition of our army has become a scandal and a bye-word. Recruiting has fallen off, we have no men to send to South Africa except the weak and ignorant off-scourings of our large towns, whom Lord Kitchener contemptuously returns on our hands as quite unfit to face the hardships of campaigning, and the system of sending periodical reliefs for the Indian garrison has completely broken down. The Chancellor

of the Exchequer, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, with that curious lack of any sense of proportion which distinguishes the present Government, says we are not spending nearly so much money as our forefathers did in the war against Napoleon. That is true, and, if we had to fight an enemy like Napoleon, the country would not grudge ten times the money. But what exasperates the English people is that our present foe is so insignificant, and that still we make no headway.

We might do better with conscription, and to that, no doubt, we shall be driven if the present state of things goes on. For my own part I should welcome conscription. The prejudice against it which is still cherished by the Liberal party is only a relic of "a creed outworn." Liberals should rejoice to see a really national and democratic army replacing the present professional army, which is only a preserve of class privilege and social snobbery. Every Continental army has adopted conscription; our own great colonies have taken it up as the cheap defence of nations; and the training which young Englishmen now

get at public schools and in the volunteers should make the burden exceedingly light for them. The example of France shows that an army which really represents the nation is bound to be thoroughly peaceful in its disposition. The frequent revolutions in Paris in the old days were the work of professional soldiers. The fiercest street fighting recorded in history is that of 1830, when the discharged soldiers of the grand army of Napoleon were still active and eager for revenge. The professional soldier now in France is quite powerless, and, as we saw in Boulanger's case, the national army will not lend itself to carry out the designs of any ambitious general. If conscription were the parent of militarism, the present Government would have adoped it long ago. What our rulers love is a little army which will not get out of hand, and whose officers form a great social club, which is the obedient servant of smart society in London. Hence, we have an army officered by sportsmen who do not take their business seriously, and who spend most of their time in keeping in a flourishing condition the clubs, the theatres, the restaurants, the

fashionable shops, the evening newspapers, and the other luxuries of the West End of London. Such an army should never be tolerated by any nation which was not "debauched with ease" and long self-indulgence.

We are often told that, by way of compensation for the disasters which have crowded so thickly upon the Empire, we have brought the Colonies nearer to us, and welded the Empire more closely together. But is this the case? While acknowledging, with pride and gratitude, the intense loyalty of the colonies, we can see that they have taken advantage of the present opportunity to emancipate themselves completely and for ever from the rule of Downing Street, and to make themselves thoroughly independent nations. They have received the right to make their own laws, to adopt their own commercial and financial policy, to impose their own taxes, to have their own armies and fleets, and even to conclude treaties with foreign nations, and the very last thing any one of them would ever agree to would be to contribute a single shilling to any committee of council or organisation sitting in

London. They refused even to send representatives to poor Mr. Chamberlain's proposed Imperial Court of Appeal. So vanishes the dream of Colonial Federation.

The Government has naturally suffered from the depression caused by the gloomy political outlook. Signs abound that the Government has lost all its popularity, and that any bold and capable leader could easily upset it. The attitude of the nation towards the Government is, to adapt the poet's words, that of an angry people, which, creeping nigher, "glares at one who nods and blinks beside a slowly dying fire." Lord Salisbury himself has ceased to count. He no longer, I deeply regret to say, for it is painful to record the practical effacement from public life of an illustrious man who has been an ornament to his age, directs the policy of the administration which is called by his name. There is a famous picture, by Turner, of "the fighting *Téméraire*" being dragged to her last moorings by a noisy, puffing little steam tug. I sometimes think that this picture exactly describes the present position of Lord Salisbury. Mr. Chamberlain has him in tow, and he is

quite helpless to steer his own course. Mr. Balfour has conducted the House of Commons in such a languid and lackadaisical fashion, as if Parliamentary business should be regarded as an interlude between a game of golf in the morning and an evening spent at the opera, that he no longer commands popular respect. Mr. Chamberlain is detested both in the House of Commons and in the constituencies. As for the remaining twenty members of the Cabinet, or whatever their numbers may be, does anybody even remember their names?

Will the Liberals now come forward with a straight and determined policy, and offer us the chance of an alternative government? Will they cease astonishing the public with discussions which, to use a phrase which was popular thirty years ago, resemble nothing so much as "the strange windy scufflings of kites and crows"? After the North-east Lanark election, we need not give ourselves much more concern about Liberal Imperialism, which is only a cunning device of courtiers to play the game of the Salisbury-Chamberlain combination. Nor is it of any use to talk of domestic reforms

which may find their place twenty years hence. A definite issue must be placed before the country, and Englishmen must be told how the war can be ended and a lasting peace established in South Africa. We have tried violence, and that has failed. The only result of the war so far has been to train all the Boers, including the children who are to form the rising generation, to hate the English name with an undying hatred. Is it not sheer mockery to talk of settling this business by having recourse to still harsher measures, in obedience to the ferocious outcry of the ministerial press, which shouts for more and more hangings and shootings as clamorously as the Roman crowd in the amphitheatre used to shout *Christianos ad leones?*

The policy of Lord Milner has failed conspicuously. What can be thought of the judgment of a man, who, coming over to England professedly as an emissary of peace, could only hiss out the words, "panoplied hatred, insensate ambition, invincible ignorance," to describe the people he said he wished to conciliate? Not only has he failed in any way to bring the Boers

of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State to terms, but he has driven the whole of Cape Colony also into rebellion. The Cape was the most loyal and prosperous colony that England possessed. It remained steadfast to the British connexion all through the war, and even stood the strain of De Wet's invasion. The last straw that broke the confidence of the Cape Dutch in the English Government was the institution of martial law, with its arbitrary code of cruelty and injustice, which followed close upon Lord Milner's scornful refusal to discuss in a reasonable spirit the memorial adopted by the Dutch at Worcester. Now, a great part of Cape Colony has risen in arms against us, and the area subject to war and desolation in South Africa has been indefinitely extended. Every month that passes removes the hope of reconciliation to a more distant era, and the only hope of peace lies in the chance that a Liberal leader in this country will boldly formulate the terms on which he thinks an arrangement with the Boers might be made. It should be made clear that the annexation imperiously demanded by Mr.

Chamberlain and the annexation to which Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman gives his assent are two very different things, and that the latter form of annexation might be without difficulty accepted by the Boers.

The Liberal leader has now declared that negotiations with the Boers must be reopened, and that they should be taken out of the hands of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Milner. Thus a distinct issue has been raised, on which battle can be joined, and the verdict of the constituencies challenged. The Duke of Devonshire, in a recent speech, has curiously missed the true significance of the interesting account given by Mr. Adams of General Lee's surrender to General Grant. The Duke says the moral of the story is that true patriots do not continue a useless war when they know they are beaten. But the point made by Mr. Adams was that at the crisis of a war the settlement should be taken out of the hands of politicians and left to the men who do the actual fighting. Jefferson Davis, we are told, would have gone on with the war, but Lee would not allow him. So the generals in the field would long ago have made

terms with the Boers, if the politicians had left them alone. General Buller would have done so after his interview with Louis Botha. Lord Kitchener had actually settled matters with the Boer commander-in-chief, when Mr. Chamberlain interfered and said they were preposterous. Sir Bindon Blood had an interview not long ago with Ben Viljoen, and found him most reasonable and moderate in his views. It is not the generals who will not make peace but the politicians. Why not throw over both Mr. Kruger and Mr. Chamberlain, and send a man of common sense to General Botha to explain what we want?

It is said that the Boer leaders will accept nothing short of independence. But what do they mean by independence? Simply, I should say, the right to govern their own little Republics, which the British Empire can easily spare. They do not seek to meddle with imperial politics. They have felt the power of England. Our flag, soiled at Majuba, has now been washed red in the blood of countless Boers. They have seen their country laid waste by a host of British soldiers,

they know that we are masters of the sea, and it would cost them no humiliation to admit that we must be supreme in South Africa, so long as they are left free to manage their own business. Is there no one in England who will listen to the voice of moderation, and meet the enemy half way? Surely we have had enough of "insensate" passion, born of wounded vanity and vindictiveness, on both sides. The future of all South Africa, perhaps of the Empire, is at stake. Parliament is about to resume its deliberations. Will no one stand forward in that august assembly to appeal to the national conscience in favour of making such a settlement as will bring salvation to South Africa, and restore peace and prosperity to the British Empire?

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